

Two ABU students shot, varsity closed down

Two students of the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria were on Friday allegedly shot and seriously wounded by the police during an early morning violent demonstration by the students of the institution.

The protest was in connection with a proposed increment in tuition fee by the authorities of the university. Eye-witnesses told our correspondent that the two students, whose identities could not be immediately established, were hit by stray bullets from the shots allegedly fired by policemen drafted to stop the protests from spreading beyond the university campus at Samaru.

While one of the two male students was shot on the right side of his chest, the other one was said to have been hit on his left thigh. As at press-time, the condition of the two students could not be ascertained as they were rushed to an undisclosed private hospital in Zaria for treatment.

Angered by the alleged shooting of their two colleagues, the protesting students threw missiles and other objects at the police, resulting in further commotion. As the situation degenerated, hundreds of students barricaded the highway leading to Katsina and took control of the entire vicinity, forcing the police to

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beat a retreat from the scene.

The students made bonfires on the highway with disused tyres and obstructed human and vehicular traffic. Armed soldiers were subsequently drafted to the two main gates leading to the university campus even as the students chanted war songs and abusive slogans against the ABU authorities.

Our correspondent gathered that the ABU students were angered by the proposal to increase tuition fee from N11,000 to N36,000 beginning from the next academic session. The notice of the proposal was said to have been published in the institution's news bulletin circulated on Thursday on the university campus.

The students had on Thursday night reacted to the proposed increment in tuition fee by laying a siege on the official residence of the ABU Vice Chancellor, Prof. Abdullahi Shehu, who was said to have narrowly escaped an attack by the rampaging students.

His official residence was, however, said to have been vandalised during the students' initial protest and property worth millions of naira destroyed in the process. The students, who reportedly vandalised several vehicles within the university

campus and at the residence of the VC, including his Toyota Hilux Jeep, also attacked the residence of the Dean of Students' Affairs, where they allegedly destroyed more property.

Academic activities at the university had been brought to a halt as the protesting students were said to have attacked lecturers and other officials of the institution found within the campus. The ABU authorities were yet to respond to the situation with any official statement at press-time but its Information and Protocol Officer, Mr. Bitrus Galmaka, confirmed to our correspondent on the telephone that the proposed increment in tuition fee resulted in the students' rampage.

He also said the institution had been shut indefinitely because the ABU management decided to forestall the situation from degenerating. Galmaka said, "In ABU, students don't pay tuition fees. So, the increment is on other fees and not tuition. For example, students in Faculty of Arts will now pay about N14,000 per session, while Science-based students will pay a maximum of N20,000 per session. The increase is between three and five per cent.

"I have not been able to go into the university to assess the situation and know the extent of damage. But the closure is immediate and indefinite."

The Police Public Relations Officer, Aliyu Aminu, denied that two students of the institution were shot during the protest. According to Aminu, the police were invited to the scene of the protest to maintain law and order. "There was a student unrest but nobody shot anybody. Our attention was drawn to maintain law and order. We were there to control the situation. We are still there to ensure that the place is peaceful," he said.

Children with polio

Federal Government to introduce polio vaccination in Northern states were met by stiff opposition as some people in the affected states claimed that the vaccines were harmful. The programme was only kicked off after tests conducted by government scientists showed that the vaccines were not harmful.

Contacted on the telephone on Friday, the Chief Press Secretary to the Minister of Health, Marshal

has implications for the GPLN procedure for VDPV detection. All poliovirus isolates are screened using two complementary ITD tests.

"This approach has successfully identified cVDPV outbreaks in five countries (Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Myanmar, and the Philippines) since 2000 but failed to flag multiple type 2 VDPVs from Nigeria and type 2 and type 3 VDPVs from Madagascar."