

One feared killed in Auchi poly students' protest

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There was pandemonium on Thursday at the Federal Polytechnic, Auchi, Edo State, following a protest by the students of the School of Part-time Studies.

The students were protesting the decision of the school's authorities which said that all students must pay their tuition fees before they would be allowed to write their examinations.

It was learnt that several persons were injured while properties belonging to the institution and some of its officials were reportedly destroyed during the protest which later turned violent.

Riot policemen and soldiers were deployed in the campus when the protest took a violent dimension.

Troubled started on the campus of the polytechnic when security operatives prevented some students who had yet to pay their tuition fees from writing their examinations.

The security operatives, allegedly acting on the directive of the management of the institution, were said to have also torn the examination sheets of some of the students who forced their way into the examination hall.

The development was said to have angered the students and sparked a riot that also disrupted the conduct of the examination in other halls.

One of the students described the management's decision on the payment of tuition as "unfair" with the current economic situation in the country and urged the management to reverse the decision.

"We are protesting because the school's management prevented us from writing our first semester examination because we have not paid our school fees. The school's management is not fair to us and we want the decision reversed," the student said.

When contacted, the school's Public Relations Officer, Mr. Mustapher Oshiobugie, explained that the policy of the institution was for students to pay their school fees before writing their examinations.

He blamed the protest on some of the students, whom he said were out to disrupt the examinations.

The PPRO also debunked the rumour that one of the students died in the protest.

He said, "The management's position is that if they (students) must write their exams, they must pay their fees and be registered as students. So, those who didn't pay their fees and didn't register are the ones trying to ensure that the exams did not hold. They went on to vandalise properties."

He, however, noted that the academic exercise had been shifted to Monday.

"No. That (death) is not to my knowledge. If you are not registered, you are not a student and if you are not a student, you cannot write exams. The exams have been postponed till Monday," the school's spokesman told our correspondent on the telephone.

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