

# Policemen shoot three polytechnic students during protest

June 20, 2016



*Scene of the protest*

Peter Dada and Afeez Hanafi

There was confusion on Sunday at the Rufus Giwa Polytechnic, Owo, Ondo State, after policemen attached to the 'B' Division Police Station, Otapete, reportedly opened fire on protesting students.

It was learnt that three students sustained gunshot injuries during the incident and had been taken to the Federal Medical Centre, Owo, for treatment.

*PUNCH Metro* gathered that trouble started on Saturday when some policemen in a patrol van knocked down two students of the institution while chasing a motorcyclist.

The cops reportedly abandoned the students and fled the scene.

Angered by the development, the students reportedly marched to the police station on Sunday morning.

*PUNCH Metro* learnt that the policemen at the station fired tear gas canisters to disperse the rampaging students, who allegedly destroyed vehicles parked in the station in reprisal.

The cops consequently opened fire on the protesters, during which three of them were hit by bullets.

The students later stormed the Owo/Akure Expressway, causing a gridlock that lasted for several hours. They also blocked some areas in the town and made bonfires on the roads.

A student, who identified himself only as Olanrewaju, said, "The students were on a motorcycle when the policemen used their vehicle to hit them. They did not bother to take the students to the hospital which prompted the students' protest this morning (Sunday). The policemen were shooting continuously; three students were injured in the process."

Another student, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said some students sustained injuries while scampering to safety, adding that one of the shot students later died.

He said, "Gunshots rent the air and there was confusion everywhere. We were running helter-skelter to avoid being hit by bullets. I learnt one of the students that were shot died. Many people were injured and vehicles were destroyed during the clash."

The state Police Public Relations Officer, Mr. Femi Joseph, regretted the accident involving the police patrol van, saying it was not deliberate, faulting the claim that the police abandoned the injured students.

He said, "The hitting of the students by the police vehicle was accidental. It was a total lie that the driver abandoned the students because he immediately took the victims to a hospital and they are currently receiving treatment."

The Vice-President of the National Association of Nigerian Students, Mr. Timileyin Ayenuro, called for the immediate removal of the DPO for his role in the crisis.

"The students also want an apology from the police over the matter. The students arrested during the protest should be released immediately; the police should stop harassing students," he added.

The Head of Information, Protocol and Public Relations Unit of the polytechnic, Mr. Olumide Olugosi, said no student died during the protest.

He said one of the injured students was referred to the Obafemi Awolowo University Teaching Hospital,

Ife, Osun State, for treatment.

“The three students that sustained gunshot injuries are stable and are receiving treatment at the Federal Medical Centre, Owo,” he added.

**Copyright PUNCH.**

*All rights reserved. This material, and other digital content on this website, may not be reproduced, published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed in whole or in part without prior express written permission from PUNCH.*

**Contact: [editor@punchng.com](mailto:editor@punchng.com)**