

# One killed as soldiers, mourners clash in Jos

6th June 2023



By James Abraham

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One person was on Monday confirmed dead after soldiers clashed with mourners in Jos, the Plateau State capital.

*The PUNCH* gathered that trouble started when the mourners, who were in a procession, got to a checkpoint manned by soldiers at the Mararaba Jamaa community in the Jos South Local Government Area.

The soldiers were said to have ordered the mourners to alight from their motorcycles, a development which led to misunderstanding and eventual clash.

It was further gathered that following the killing of one of the mourners, some women and youths took to the streets in protest.

A youth leader and National Publicity Secretary of the Berom Youths Moulders Association, Mr Rwang Tengwong, confirmed the clash to *The PUNCH* in Jos on Monday saying that one person was also injured during the incident.

The youth leader said, “The Berom Youths Moulder-Association is immeasurably saddened and disappointed over an avoidable killing of its member, Mr Kenneth Gyang (18 years) and Emmanuel Daniel Pam (38) injured by one personnel of Operation Safe Haven-OPSH stationed at Vwei (Mararaba-Jama’a) of Kuru District, Jos South LGA at about 9am of today, 5/6/2023 with no any form of provocation known to us.

“The victims, amongst other mourners, were in a procession from Zawan Mortuary for a burial of a relation at Kuru Community in Jos South LGA. But on approaching the OPSH checkpoint, a military officer pointed a rifle at the mourners that they must all come down and push their motorcycles which had never happened before now. When they asked him as to the rationale behind the unusual confrontation and unilateral order, surprisingly, the officer unprovokedly opened direct shot at the victims, leaving one dead and another injured despite been told that it’s a funeral procession that is passing by.

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“What is also baffling is that funeral processions have never had such confrontation or prohibition either by order or convention from the security agents at this or any other checkpoint in Jos and its environs.

“Another unfortunate development is the destruction/burgling of homes, church auditorium, shops and property of people around the Mararaba-Jama’a after the tragedy.”

The group demanded an investigation into the incident, asking that damages in the sum of N100m should be paid “as compensation for the precious life lost; N10m only for the injured person and N100m compensation for properties destroyed.”

Efforts to get the spokesman for the Military Task Force in charge of maintaining peace in the state, Captain Oya James, proved unsuccessful as he did not pick calls placed to his mobile line.

But state Governor, Caleb Mutfwang, condemned the incident in a statement by his Special Assistant on Media, Gyang Bere.

“He (the governor) condemned the action of the security officer who pulled the trigger that led to the death of the young man and called on relevant authorities to investigate the matter and bring the culprit to book,” it read.

“The governor said for a new and united Plateau to be built, there must be mutual understanding and trust between citizens and security agencies.”