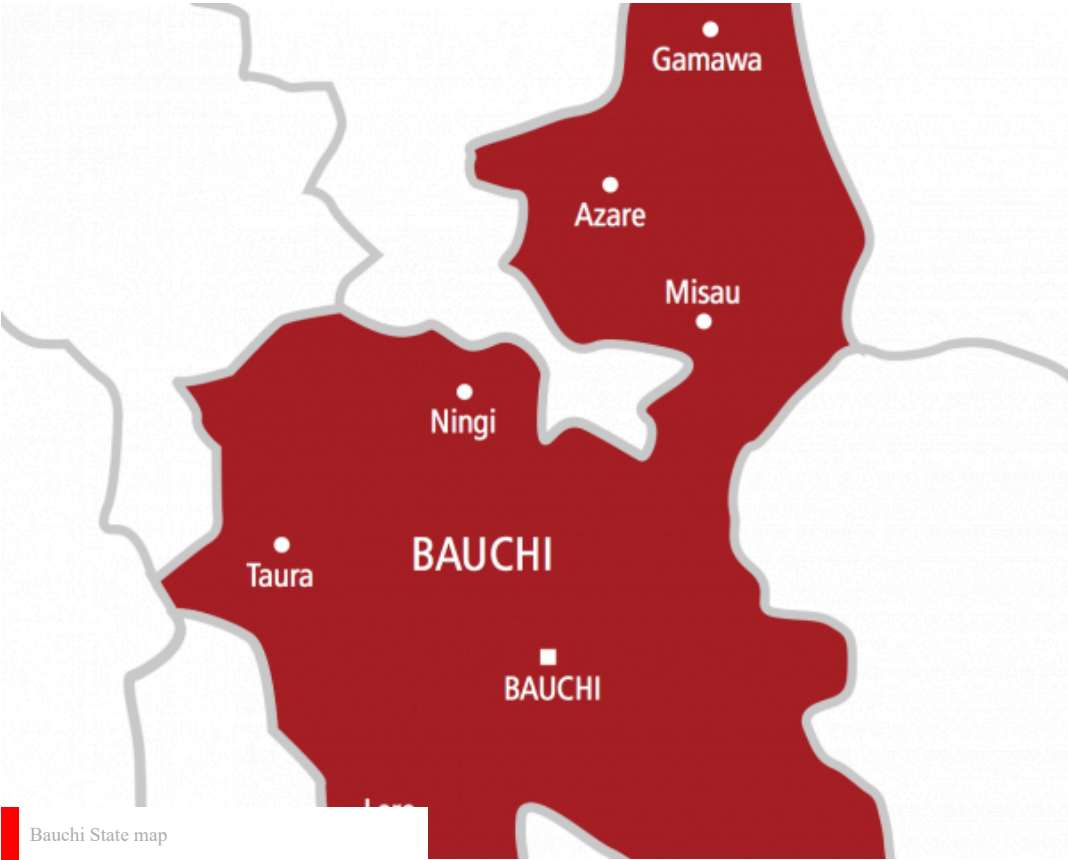


# Bauchi JTF kills man, injures others during confrontation

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Bauchi State map

By Umar Sani

The members of Operation Safe Haven stationed at the Lere community in the Tafawa Balewa Local Government Area of Bauchi State, on Tuesday, killed a resident of the community, Habibu Aminu, and injured other youths

during a confrontation.

The Bauchi State Police Public Relations Officer, Ahmed Wakil, said the incident happened at a checkpoint when the officers, after a misunderstanding, opened fire at the youths who were coming back from a political campaign rally at night.

“Some members of the Peoples Democratic Party from Lere Village in Tafawa Balewa LGA in three Sharon vehicles went for a campaign in Lere district preparatory to the local government elections coming up on August 17, 2024.

“On their way back, they had to pass through a checkpoint mounted by Personnel of Operation Safe Heaven based in Tafawa Balewa. They were stopped at the checkpoint but refused to stop and drove to Lere.”

According to the PPRO, “The troop went and arrested one of the drivers in his house at Lere. Consequently, the people became more aggressive and went back to the checkpoint to free the arrested driver. In the event of that, the troop retracted and opened fire at the people.”

He noted that the development led to one Habibu Aminu, Babawo, Nawawu, Abdulrashid, Ahmed Yashim, and Yakubu Bello, all residents of Tafawa Balewa, sustaining various degrees of injuries.

He further stated that Aminu later died at the hospital while others were responding to treatment.

Wakili continued, “Some more people went and mobilised themselves and attacked the Palace of the District Head of Lere.”

However, while speaking with PUNCH Metro on Sunday, a brother to the deceased, Idris Aminu, said he was together with his brother at the time he was shot, and that it didn’t happen at the checkpoint.

Aminu said, “We were together with him at night, and it was rainy when the soldiers came into the town. When they came, we were standing with him under a verandah in the market.

“Then he said we should go out of the verandah, but I said my phone might get wet in the rain. I had to look for nylon to enclose my phone. So, I asked them to go that I would join them.”

He said that immediately they stepped out of the verandah together with two fellows, they were shot at. “The first shot was at Babawo who is currently receiving treatment.

“That is also how brother was shot immediately he crossed one drainage there.”

According to him, when they got shot, the youths picked them up and wanted to take them to the hospital, but they were stopped by a soldier who denied them passage for about who minutes.

“A soldier stopped them, saying they would not take them to the hospital. They spent over 30 minutes before he (a soldier) granted them passage to the hospital,” he added.

Aminu said that the delay was what led to the loss of blood from the body of his brother, which eventually led to his death.

He bitterly said, “One thing I forgot to mention is that my brother is not used to staying long outside at night, but as destiny might have it, he stayed long outside that night.”

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A resident of the Lere community, Muhammad Ibrahim, also testified that his son, Zaharaddeen Muhammad, was shot in his right eye.

When visited and interviewed by our correspondent at the Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University Teaching Hospital, ATBUTH Bauchi, where they are receiving treatments, Muhammad explained that the incident occurred where his son was shot in the eye on the night of Tuesday “There was tension in the town between the military and the youth, so it is said that the local government chairman is coming to the village head palace to address the youth. Zaraddeen went there as well, so before the local government chairman even arrived that was when he got shot.”

He stated, “It is unfortunate we are pained. But, we believe every human being has their destiny which must occur to him even on his bed.”

He said the eye is removed, “Zaharaddeen now has one eye. Their eye is completely removed now.”

Muhammad, while noting that he had no intention of taking a case on anybody, urged the government to investigate the matter and bring a lasting solution to the lingering insecurity in the community.

On his part, the youth leader, Muhammadu Nuhu, debunked the claim that the gunshots happened at the JTF checkpoint.

He said, “Of course, there was a misunderstanding between the soldiers and youths that day at the checkpoint when they came back from the chairmanship campaign rally. But, that is not where the gunshots happened.

“It happened when the soldiers followed some of the youths to the town at night to arrest them. And the youth revolted.”

“The officer’s gunshot was as a result of the chanting of disagreement on the JTF heavily imposed authority on the community.

“The youths were shouting and saying they would not comply anymore with the month-long curfew, and that was how the clash and gunshot erupted,” he said.

He recalled that the said curfew was imposed in the community without relaxation for long.

“For about a month now, there had been a misunderstanding that happened between a driver and a section of the youths from the Lere community and the JTF at the checkpoint stations in the community.

“That day at about 9 pm, the JTF came into the town and forced everyone to close business and go home.”

He noted that as a result, the village head conducted a meeting that included the guard commander of JTF and the youth leader where all the sections were given a fair hearing, leading to agreement that the driver and youth were at fault.

“After that, the traditional leaders and youths accepted fault and pleaded with the guard commander.

“We also requested that the curfew the day before be relaxed, but the guard commander complaint said the curfew would not be relaxed,” he said.

According to the youth leader, that is how the curfew lasted for months in the community until the recorded clash and loss of life.