

# Many feared dead as soldiers, Shiites clash in Abuja

From **Molly Kilete** and **Fred Itua**, Abuja

**THE** Islamic Movement in Nigeria (IMN) has accused the Nigerian Army of killing 10 of its members at Zuba in the Federal Capital Territory, yesterday.

The group said their members were killed and several others injured while on a peaceful religious procession of Arba'een from Suleja. A statement by the President, Media Forum of the group, Ibrahim Musa, condemned the action of the soldiers describing it as "unwarranted" especially when the procession was peaceful. Musa said: "The procession was being rounded up for the day, when soldiers opened fire on the peaceful marchers without any provocation whatsoever. The fact that a similar Arba'een march was conducted in Kano along the Kano-Zaria highway for two days without any incident is enough a pointer to the peaceful nature of the annual religious rites. Similar Arba'een mourning processions are currently ongoing in Katsina and Kaduna states without any incident."

The Islamic movement cautioned security agents to stop harassing its members, "since today is just the beginning of the peaceful mourning march on foot and it is expected that more people may join the mass peaceful march, which will culminate in the grand Arba'een day to be marked on Tuesday, October 30, 2018, the same day it would be

commemorated worldwide."

An eyewitness told Sunday Sun that soldiers at a checkpoint in Zuba killed no fewer than five members of the Islamic sect.

According to an eyewitness, the Shiites were in a procession from Suleja in Niger State to the capital city to protest the continuous detention of their leader, Sheikh Ibrahim El-Zakzaky.

"As members of Shiite Movement were coming from Suleja, on getting to the checkpoint in Dan Kogi, Zuba, the military men asked them to go back.

But they bluntly refused and started stoning the soldiers and they gunned five of them down immediately.

"Shiite members were not perturbed seeing five of their men laying dead on the road. They were determined to fight to finish as they blocked the road causing traffic gridlock for more than an hour," the eyewitness who doesn't want to be named said. He added that, "it took a combined effort of military men from Dei Dei, Dakwa and Zuba to scatter them", as they later ran in different directions for safety.

When contacted, the Director, Army Public Relations, Brig. Gen. Texas Chukwu, said he was not aware of the clash between the soldiers and the group.

Chukwu, who said he was not in Abuja, however promised to get back with credible information about what transpired but never did at the time of filing this report.