

News around the

Senate orders repatriation of Nigerians in Libya

• Europe not better than Nigeria- Kalu

From Fred Itua, Abuja

THE Senate yesterday ordered the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs to commence immediate evacuation of Nigerians still holed up in Libya.

The decision of the Senate, followed the adoption of a motion tagged: "The Death of nine Nigerian migrants in Libya". The motion was sponsored by Barau Jibrin.

The Senate lamented that migrants seeking to reach Europe remain prey to numerous militias vying for the control of the country's oil wealth.

Jibrin said: "There are reports that following the first impact, some refugees and migrants were fired upon by guards as they tried to escape which resulted in the death of nine Nigerian citizens."

"The strike marks the second time that the Tajore detention center, which houses around 600 migrants, has been hit during the ongoing conflict."

"Smugglers try to get migrants who are mainly from Nigeria and other sub-Saharan African countries to Europe in crammed rubber boats. Libyan coast guards funded by the European Union intercept these dingy inflatable contraptions and return them to detention camps."

"With funding from the EU bloc, Libyans found a new venture in setting up deportation camps. Detention is not the answer to the protection of people on the move, alternative and sustainable solu-

SHEIKH EL-ZAKZAKY'S TRIAL

Shi'ites' protest at NASS turns bloody

- Policeman, another shot, many wounded, vehicles burnt
- Police arrest 40 as Senate promises to probe attack

From Molly Kilete and Fred Itua, Abuja

SUPPORTERS of detained leader of the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN), otherwise known as the Shi'ites, Ibrahim Yaqoub El-Zakzaky, yesterday forced their way into the National Assembly (NASS) complex and engaged security agents in a fight.

A policeman, who was shot by supporters of El-Zakzaky died hours later.

He died few hours after he was moved out of the NASS clinic where he was initially rushed to for immediate treatment.

Another policeman, who sustained gunshot injuries too, is receiving treatment at an undisclosed hospital in Abuja.

An unnamed protester was also reportedly shot dead by security agents attached to the National Assembly.

According to witnesses, trouble started when the hundreds of supporters staged a protest at the NASS.

They were in the complex to protest the continuous detention of their leader held by operatives of the Department of State Services (DSS).

They made an attempt to enter the NASS complex, but were resisted by a joint team of security agents who were on guard.

Witnesses said the security agents were overpowered by the protesters who succeeded in pulling down the first gate leading to the complex.

In an attempt to disperse the crowd, protesters were teargassed by security agents. While scampering for safety, some of them sustained minor injuries.

Angered by the pushback, the protesters launched a reprisal and reportedly snatched a gun from one of the security agents.

One of the policemen was reportedly shot in the head. He was rushed to the NASS clinic.

More reinforcements were made and the protesters were repelled.

When our correspondent visited the scene, about five damaged cars parked beside the first gate were seen.

While one was completely burnt, the other four were smashed, including a police van stationed there.

However, the incident didn't force any of the two chambers to adjourn the day's legislative business despite the tension created by the fracas.

Earlier in the year, the protesters stormed the NASS and pulled down the entrance gate, while trying to enter.

Spokesman of the Senate, Adedayo

Adeyeye, while briefing newsmen, said they didn't know when the fracas was going on.

He, however, said the Senate would look at the issue and take a position on it.

He said: "The National Assembly is a public place. They can go through the right channel and come for a discussion. But they have to do it the right way. This is a matter we will look at."

Meanwhile, the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Police Command said it has arrested 40 members of the IMN in Abuja.

Their arrest followed a clash by the group with the police around the NASS and Federal secretariat area where their members turned out in their hundreds to demand for the unconditional release of their leader who has been in detention since 2015.

The protesters mostly young boys came at about 12.30pm and took over the road leading to the NASS and took charge of the control of traffic before they went violent destroying vehicles of innocent motorists.

The command's public relations officer, Manzah Anjuguri, said: "The FCT Police Command has foiled a violent move by members of the El-Zakzaky Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN) to forcefully invade the National Assembly on Tuesday, July 10."

"The group which started its activity camouflaged in a peaceful procession became violent and were trying to force their way into the NASS."

Police operatives on the ground, however, acted proactively, professionally and used minimum force to disperse the unruly protesters.

"Members of the sect during the violent protest shot two police personnel on the leg, while clubs and stones were used to inflict injuries on six other policemen. The injured policemen have been taken to the hospital for prompt medical attention."

"Meanwhile, 40 members of the sect have been arrested in connection with the violent protest. Investigation is in progress."

"In view of the foregoing, the command wishes to state unequivocally that while it recognizes and respects the right of citizens to peaceful procession, an attempt by any individual or group of persons to cause the breakdown of law and order will not be tolerated. Those arrested in the process will be dealt with in accordance with the appropriate law of the land."

"Members of the public are enjoined to go on with their lawful activities as normalcy has been restored, and adequate security measures have been placed by the command to forestall any security breach."

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