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### **Gunshots Cause Panic in Maiduguri Mosque**

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Police Headquarters

By Michael Olugbode

There was pandemonium at a mosque in Maiduguri, the Borno State capital, Sunday as worshippers had to scamper for safety on hearing gunshots from a close distance.

It was gathered that in the ensuing milieu, a minor was killed in a stampede, which also caused injury on several other worshippers.

It was learnt from some of the worshippers that some members of the Boko Haram sect had attempted to attack the mosque, Al-Amin Daggash Mosque in the GRA during a Ramadan sermon.

The witnesses said the sect members shot severally into the air when they got to the vicinity of the mosque and attempted to move into the congregation but were dispersed by a heavily armed vigilante group.

One of the eyewitnesses, said the assailants came to the mosque at about 430 p.m. on Saturday, when the Ramadan preaching was in session at the mosque, shooting into the air and trying to gain access to the mosque.

They were dispersed by the youths who stood their grounds, but many worshippers had to take to their heels and this caused pandemonium that led to the death of the minor and several injuries, the eyewitnesses revealed.

But the Joint Task Force (JTF) in the state, Operation Restore Order, while confirming the gunshots in the vicinity of the mosque, claimed it was not from the sect but rather a policeman on the trail of a thief.

In a statement signed by the task force spokesman, Lt. Col. Sagir Musa, said: "The Joint Task Force (JTF), Operation Restore Order, wishes to clear the air on what happened at the vicinity of Al-Amin Daggash Mosque in GRA Maiduguri on July 20. The incident was not a terrorist attack as no worship centre in the state was attack in recent time.

"It was an error of judgment by a policeman on duty that pursued someone who allegedly stole a tricycle and a bag of rice and drove off. The policeman was in mufti, wore NPF Reflective Jacket, pursued the alleged thief and fired two shots."

He added: "The incident happened very close to Al-Amin Mosque when Ramadan preaching was on. The firing by the policemen attracted the attention of worshippers including youths vigilante that were within and around the mosque. As a result, there was pandemonium that led to the death of one minor and three others sustained injuries."

Musa also claimed that: "The vigilante lynched the policeman, burnt the Toyota Carina car (that the policeman was in) and the tricycle. The JTF patrol team rescued/took away the policeman, calmed the youth and restored normalcy to the area."

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