

## One dead, 3 injured as el-Zakzaky protest turns bloody

Baba Negedu  
KADUNA

**T**here was pandemonium in Kaduna yesterday evening when the Police engaged members of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria (IMN) following a protest over the continued detention of their leader, Sheikh Ibraheem El Zakzaky.

By the time the dust settled, one person was said to have been killed and three others, including a policeman sustained injuries.

Our correspondent

gathered that the wounded persons were receiving medical treatment at an undisclosed hospital in Kaduna.

However, the spokesperson of the Kaduna Police Command, Aliyu Mukhtar, said no one was killed as only three persons, including a police personnel were injured.

He also said some arrests have been made.

Members of the IMN were said to have gathered for the Free Zakzaky protests in Kaduna metropolis, along Ahmadu Bello Way /Kano road at about 5pm.

An eye witness account said the police shot sporadically into the air to disperse the protesting crowd, who refused to move and a brawl ensued.

As the melee lasted, motorists and other residents hurriedly made U-turns to other routes to escape the troubled areas as sound of police gun fire and the biting smell of teargas rent the air.

Shop owners within the metropolis and environs of the business area abruptly closed their shops and scampered to safety for fear of being hit by stray

bullets.

Reacting to the fracas, Police PPRO, ASP Aliyu Mukhtar, said that there was no death recorded during the Shi'ites protest in Kaduna.

According to him, when the police got wind of the protest by the Shi'ites, they quickly mobilised their men to go to the scene and disperse the protesters.

"You know there is a law by the state government, banning streets protest without due approval from the authority.

"It was against that background that we swung

into action to ensure law and order. In the process of dispersing the protesters, a Policeman and two of the protesters were injured, but there was no death. Those that were even injured sustained minor injuries.

"We have also arrested some of the protesters but as we speak, I cannot confirm the number of arrested persons". He said.

Before the protest, spokesman of the IMN, Ibrahim Musa, had issued a statement, that "Free Zakzaky processions were to be carried out in major towns of Northern Nigeria to press for the freedom of Sheikh Ibraheem El Zakzaky because of the news of his deteriorating state of health.

"In Kaduna, hundreds of members of the Movement and sympathizers came out on at least three occasions to demonstrate in demand for immediate freedom for the Sheikh to enable him go to seek urgent treatment"

Musa added that, "also, in other major cities, like Katsina, Zaria, Azare and Illela, brothers and sisters of the Islamic Movement took to the streets in condemnation of the way the Federal Government is handling the health of the leader of the Islamic Movement now in illegal detention.

"Reports from where the Sheikh is being held incommunicado indicated that he is seriously sick for the past two days."

