

One killed, others injured in soldiers, SARS men's clash



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By **Correspondents**

O

ne person was reportedly killed yesterday when men of the Nigerian Army and those of the Police Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) clashed in Gboko Local Government Area of Benue State.

Apart from the person said to have been killed by stray bullet, several others, among them children, were also injured during the clash.

The incident occurred at Akaajime, on the ever-busy Mkar-Gboko Road, when worshippers were going to the church for the morning service.

Those who were wounded were rushed to different hospitals for treatment.

It was learnt that trouble started when a newly wedded Army Lance Corporal (name withheld) and his colleagues were heading to the church for a thanksgiving at Mkar when a SARS patrol team on routine patrol, overtook the Army's vehicle and blocked them.

"In an attempt by the Army to overtake the SARS vehicle, the SARS officials started shooting sporadically at the soldiers, ordering them to park.

“The soldiers’ explanations that they were going to the church fell on deaf ears as the SARS officials requested for the identity cards and vehicle particulars of Army officers who were mostly in mufti.

“When one of the soldiers brought out his ID card, the SARS leader grabbed it and from there, it became a serious conflict between the uniformed men. The police were shooting sporadically to scare the soldiers but the latter didn’t give a damn, although many of them were not armed.

“The soldiers were in a private Nisan car with their colleague who wedded on Saturday,” a witness said.

Another witness, who also pleaded anonymity, told our correspondent that, “the soldiers, who were in their uniforms, except two personnel, told the police team they were escorting their newly wedded colleague to a thanksgiving and felt embarrassed by their request for documents.

“At this point, one of the policemen stopped the soldiers from passing and the latter angrily fired sporadically into the air.

“The clash subsided when the community leaders and youths identified the couple as members of the community but not kidnappers as police were reportedly suspecting.”

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