

Debora: 2 die, scores injured as youths protest arrest of alleged culprits in Sokoto

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Thousands of Muslims faithful have staged demonstrations to press for the release of the two arrested students of Shehu Shagari College of Education, Sokoto, for alleged killing of Miss Deborah Samuel on Thursday.

The procession of the aggrieved protesters, proceeded on walk match through Ahmadu Bello Way, the old market and ended at the Sultan Muhammadu Sa'ad Abubakar's Palace.

The youth, in the course of their procession were chanting Arabic slogans, Allahu Akbar! Allahu Akbar!!, meaning,, Allah is Great.

• Govt imposes 24-hour curfew • Mob torches Cathedral, shops

The protesters, who were visibly disturbed, set ablaze old tires and other materials that made the cloud dark.

Joint security agents prevented the angry youths from entering the Sultan's Palace and also dispersed the protesters through gunshots in the air and teargas smoke. Some of the youth interviewed revealed that two persons were shot dead, while scores sustained various degrees of injuries.

Many people have been arrested, while army and other security agents have been deployed to ensure the compliance with the 24-hour curfew orders.

Meanwhile, the Sokoto State Governor Aminu Waziri Tambuwal, has de-

clared a 24-hour curfew within Sokoto metropolis, following threat to peace and order in the state.

Tambuwal, in a statement, declared a 24-hour curfew in the state and said it was based on the powers conferred on him "by sections 176(2) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria; and section 1 and 4 of the Public Order Act."

The governor also cited Section 15 of Sokoto State Peace Preservation Law, and appealed to the "people of Sokoto State to kindly continue to observe law and order and calm down (on the) restiveness currently pervading in the metropolis.

"Everyone should, please, in the interest of peace go back home and observe

this measures, with a view of the reestablishment of peace, law and order in the state.

"It is not in the interest of anyone for us to have a breakdown of law and order. I, therefore, appeal for restraint; and, for people to observe and respect the rule of law."

The protesting youths, who gathered along Ahmadu Bello way, also attacked the Holy Family Catholic Cathedral. In the process, they destroyed Church glass windows, those of the Bishop Lawton Secretariat and vandalized a community bus parked within the premises.

They were however dispersed by a team of Mobile Policemen before they could do further damage.

The youth also attacked the Bakhita Centre located along Aliyu Jodi road in Sokoto and burnt down a bus parked within the premises.

Another group attacked and reportedly torched some shops and other business premises in Hajiya Halima, a major business hub, adjacent to the Sokoto Central Market.

In a reaction, the Catholic Bishop of Sokoto Diocese, Most Reverend Matthew Hassan Kukah, commended Tambuwal, for acting promptly by declaring the 24-hour curfew to stem the protests.

Kukah also commended the security forces for promptly rising to the occasion to prevent further damage at our facilities.