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ZAKZAKY: 20 killed as Police fires tear gas, live ammunition at Shi'ites in Kano

ON NOVEMBER 15, 2016 12:07 AM / IN [HEADLINES](#), [NEWS](#) / [COMMENTS](#)

By AbdulSalam Muhammad

KANO– A bloody clash between the police and members of Islamic Movement of Nigeria, IMN, popularly known in local parlance as Shi'ites, on the outskirts of Kano metropolis, yesterday morning, claimed the life of a police sergeant and 19 members of the sect.

Scores of others, including women and children, were injured during the mayhem that lasted about two hours.

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However, Kano State Commissioner of Police, Rabi'u Yusuf put the official death toll at nine, including the Police sergeant.

A witness, who preferred anonymity, said he saw a pile of bodies of Shi'ite members being removed from the scene of the clash in a Police van.

Another witness said the crisis started when the police tried to stop the Shi'ite procession.



INJURED—Some of those injured in the Shi'ites/Police clash in Kano, yesterday.

A survivor and a Shi'ite, Ali Dan'Ali, told **Vanguard** that “at least 20 members of our group that included able-bodied men, women and children were martyred by the Police on our way to Zaria.”

In a statement by Ibrahim Musa, President, IMN Media

Forum, the Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky-led group accused the Police of firing tear gas and live ammunition at members, who were observing the annual *Arbaeen* (a symbolic trek from Kano to Zaria in Kaduna State).

The clash, which occurred at Tamburawa, an outlier of Kano Municipal Local Government Area at 8.00am, was triggered by the efforts of the Police to restore order on the busy Kano-Zaria federal highway, following reports of breakdown of law and order.

Dan'Ali said: "We came under attack by the Police around Amana city, and hundreds of people were injured in what appeared as a co-ordinated attempt to break our procession and disrupt the historic trek."

Briefing reporters in his office, the Commissioner of Police, Rabi'u Yusuf, said: "Thousands of Shi'ite members obstructed motorists and denied other road users free access to Kano-Kaduna expressway.

"They also attacked innocent citizens, damaged public and personal property, thereby causing mayhem that could lead to general disturbance of public peace in the state.

"A combined team of PMF, CTU, SARS and conventional police that were deployed to restore peace came under attack. Shi'ite members, who were armed with bows and arrows, catapults with metal bolts and cutlasses attacked the police team, killed a Police sergeant, and critically injured others."

The Police Commissioner, who was on ground during the bloody encounter, disclosed that "they snatched an AK-47 rifle from a Policeman and used it on the security agents. The AK-47 rifle was recovered, eight Shi'ite members, who were fatally injured and rushed to hospital were confirmed dead by doctors on call."

However, CP Rabi'u Yusuf said that normalcy had been restored and urged citizens to remain vigilant and report suspicious movements to the police.

IMN raises alarm

Reacting to the development, the IMN, which also alleged that soldiers were planning to plant weapons in the luggage of its members, said in a statement issued by Ibrahim Musa: "Reports reaching us from Kano said Nigeria Police have attacked the members of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria under the guidance of

Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky who were trekking for the annual Arbadeen Symbolic Trekking from Kano to Zaria, Kaduna State, Nigeria.

“The Nigeria Police blocked the road and fired tear gas at the peaceful trekkers. With the aid of Allah, the trekkers have passed through it and continued with the trekking. Men of the Nigeria Police followed the trekkers and kept on firing tear gas and live ammunition at them. They killed one and injured others.

“In a related development, soldiers mounted a check-point on the outskirts of Potiskum, Yobe State, probably to stop members of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria from leaving the town to join others in this year’s annual *Arbadeen* Trek to Zaria, mourning the martyrdom of Imam Husain (AS) scheduled to commence from Kano, this week.

“The soldiers detained a trailer carrying the personal belongings of those going to Kano for the trek today (yesterday). Throughout the nearly four decades of the existence of the IMN, it has never stockpiled, carried, or used weapons. It never had any cause to, even in the face of provocation.

“IMN, therefore, wishes to alert the general public over this evil plot, and categorically reject and disown any attempt by the security services to plant any fake evidence against members of the Islamic Movement.”

Monday’s killings came just about a year after more than 300 Shi’ites lost their lives during a clash with soldiers. They had been accused of blocking a major road in Kaduna State during a procession.

Leader of the Shi’ites, Ibrahim El-Zakzaky, had been in detention since the December attack condemned by local and international rights groups.

The killings led to the setting up of a panel of inquiry by Kaduna State government. The panel had since released its report and made

recommendations.



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