

El-Zakzaky: One feared dead as Shi'ites, police clash in Abuja

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By Luminous Jannamike— Abuja

One person was feared dead on Tuesday, following a clash between security agents and protesters, mostly members of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria, IMN, (Shi'ites), demanding the release of their detained leader, Sheikh Ibraheem El-Zakzaky, from government custody.

Witnesses said the death was caused by security agents sent to quell the street protest. The victim was allegedly killed by a bullet fired by the police.

The protest, which started near the head office of the National Human Rights Commission on Aguiyi Ironsi Street, Maitama, escalated when the police stormed the area, and fired shots and teargas canisters to disperse the crowd.

But, the protesters were said to have pelted the security agents with stones and other dangerous weapons in resistance.



In the melee, many motorists and business operators in the area were caught up in the crossfire. An unconfirmed number of people were severely injured.

The Secretary of IMN's Academic Forum, Abdullahi Musa, who confirmed the clash to Vanguard, claimed some of the critically injured were evacuated in police patrol vans to the SWAT headquarters.

He said: "Today (Tuesday), police waylaid protesters at the crossroads of Transcorp Hilton, with the match from the National Human Rights Commission. They shot many tear-gas canisters indiscriminately, dousing their victims with the gas before bullets started flying all around and one protester has been confirmed dead.



"The security operatives seriously maimed numerous protesters; critical gunshot injuries needing urgent treatment were glaring.

"Unfortunately, these victims were taken to, and dumped at the SWAT headquarters. They should be released to access treatment.

"What was the protesters' offence? Their one and only offence, if there is at all, is that in the face of all sorts of tyranny as well as against all odds, they have continued to demand the release of the most oppressed individual in the history of Nigeria, Sheikh Ibraheem el-Zakzaky.

"He was beset with bullets in a deliberate attempt at his life, his wife survived the same vicious crackdown, and his six sons were killed before his eyes.

"Thus, if this daily protest is deemed as a slap on the tyranny and persecution wrist, let our leader be released immediately and unconditionally, just before a slap in the face."

Musa also revealed that the protesters faced a similar crackdown on Monday, during a match through the Federal Secretariat, which left two protesters seriously injured at the end.

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