

4 killed at Kime filling station in Maiduguri

In Maiduguri, Borno State, four persons said to be staff of Kime filling station around Bolori junction of the metropolis, lost their lives to the protest.

At press time yesterday, the victims were still in the pool of their blood, even as video of the killings were viral on social media.

Already, Police authorities have imposed a 24-hour curfew on the state, citing violence that escalated in the nationwide protests and the bomb blast that took place in Kawuri village of Konduga Local Government Area of the state which left 20 people dead and 16 injured less than 24 hours before commencement of the protest.

Unconfirmed reports indicated that the victims/workers of the filling station died from stray bullets, while another version revealed that there was no sign of bullets/gunshots on the victims.

Speaking to one of the filling station attendants, Baba Musa, in a telephone interview, said: “It was an explosion that took place and killed four persons instantly, while I managed to escape unhurt.”

Chairman of Independent Marketers Association of Nigeria, IPMAN, Borno State branch, Alhaji Mohammed Kuluwu, confirmed the killing of four persons at Kime filling station in the afternoon, noting he had been making contact with the Director of the affected station, but couldn't get his phone line to ascertain details of what led to the killing of the victims.

But, some other witnesses insisted the victims were felled by stray bullets fired at protesters whose protest against hardship in the country had turned violent.

Protest turns violent in Kaduna, 3 feared killed, many injured, taken to hospitals

Similarly, the otherwise peaceful protest against bad governance in the country also turned violent in Kaduna, leaving no fewer than three youths dead and many other protesters injured.

An eyewitness said the number of protesters, mostly youths and the unemployed, which had outnumbered security operatives, marched from the Rigasa area and from the Abakwa end, towards the Sir Kashim Ibrahim House, the official residence and office of the state governor.

A surviving protester, who craved anonymity, said: “We were marching peacefully and no one was carrying any offensive weapon.

“I think the security operatives near Government House were threatened by our large number. Suddenly, a vehicle they use to spray hot water on protesters came speeding towards us from the Government House axis and sprayed us with hot water, then another security vehicle came on speed from the 44 Reference Hospital end.

“In the confusion that ensued and as we scampered to save ourselves from being hit by the security vehicles, three peaceful protesters were hit and they died. No one carried any weapon, we were just carrying placards and chanted slogans against bad governance.”

Meanwhile, reports indicated that the office of the Kaduna State Traffic Agency, KASTLEA, was touched by the protesters.

Major streets in the state capital were deserted, while markets and shops were closed due to fears the protest might be hijacked by hoodlums.

Combat-ready policemen and other security operatives were stationed at potential flashpoints to forestall any eventuality.

Citizens, majority of who embarked on panic buying of foodstuffs and other essentials the previous day, had remained indoors and monitored happenings on local radio and television.

Schools and other vocational training institutions, also remained closed.

Spokesperson of the Kaduna State Police Command, ASP Mansir Hassan, accused members of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria, also known as Shi'ites, of turning the peaceful protest violent.

He said they attacked a Police Armoured Personnel Carrier and some of their operatives, warning that the police would not allow hoodlums break law and order in Kaduna State. He also clarified that the number of personnel deployed for the protest in the state was 2,500 and not 25,000 earlier reported, saying the command has arrested 25 suspects involved in attacking state-owned agencies.

Meanwhile, a former lawmaker, Shehu Sani, called on protesters to shun violence and be law-abiding.

He said: "The images and clips of the looting in Kano are unfortunate and condemnable. All efforts must be put in place to secure people's lives and properties.

"The protesters have the right to protest but they should not allow hoodlums and criminals to hijack the protest and start looting.

"I totally condemn the looting in Kano. And the security should live up to expectation by ensuring law and order."