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Nigerian clash over cleric death

Clashes have broken out in the northern Nigerian city of Sokoto after a high profile Muslim preacher was shot dead.

Members of Sunni and Shia sects have fought a pitched battle with one of the three suspected gunmen beaten to death.

The Sunni preacher was shot on Wednesday night while travelling home by motorbike taxi from taking prayers.

The sultan of Sokoto, the spiritual head of Nigeria's Muslims, said Mallam Umaru Dan-Maishiye, died after being shot in the head. He appealed for calm.

"Do not take the law into your own hands... the security agencies are investigating," Sultan Mohammad Sa'ad Abubakar said on local radio stations.

Sokoto police spokesman Mohammed Umar Dakingari told the BBC that two suspects were being held in connection with the shooting of the cleric.

There has been regular friction between Sunnis and Shias in northern Nigeria, and civic leaders are meeting on how to calm tensions.

In April, the killing of a militant cleric in the city of Kano led to fighting between Islamist militants and the army.

But the BBC's reporter in Sokoto, Hassan Sahabi Sanyinnawal, says this is the first time that something of this nature has happened in Sokoto.



Sokoto is the spiritual home of Nigeria's Muslims

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