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Sunday, May 01st | Last update 10:00:00 PM GMT |



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Rights group says over 500 killed in riots - Writes Jonathan over ‘excessive use of force’

Monday, 25 April 2011 00:35 Turaki A. Hassan with agency report



More than **500** people were killed in post-election violence last week in the north, a Nigerian human **rights group** said yesterday.

The Civil **Rights** Congress (CRC) said the people were **killed** on Monday and Tuesday in three towns alone – Zonkwa, Kafanchan and Zangon Kataf – in the southern part of Kaduna state, one of the worst-hit areas.

While warning of further unrest during state elections, CRC President Shehu Sani said in a report based on testimony from the group's members in the communities that, "The victims were encircled, raided and hacked to death and their homes burned."

Churches, mosques, homes and shops were set ablaze in the rioting. Although a military-enforced curfew brought the violence under control in major cities after little more than a day, soldiers took longer to deploy to more remote towns.

Sani said the CRC – which is based in Kaduna – confirmed 316 dead in Zonkwa, 147 in Zangon Kataf and 83 in Kafanchan.

"Soldiers did not get there until afterwards," he said.

A tally of figures from Red Cross officials, health workers and Reuters witnesses who visited morgues showed the toll was at least 130. But that was only in a few major towns and cities, excluding those mentioned in the CRC report.

Meanwhile, the CRC has written President Goodluck Jonathan **over** reports of excessive use of force in the suppression of the post election violence in some state in the north.

In a letter to the President dated 24th April, 2011 signed by CRC President Shehu Sani, the **rights group** said it has received hundreds of distress calls and complaints from the general public on the activities of the security agencies posted to some states affected by the post election violence, such as Kaduna, Kano, Sokoto, Gombe, Bauchi and Zamfara.

The letter read partly, "We are very much aware of the constitutional responsibility of the government to protect lives and properties of the citizenry in such a situation. We are, however, disturbed by the seriousness and gravity of the issues raised and of the moral and legal need to ensure balance between the necessity of the application of force and the inviolable need to respect the fundamental **rights** of the citizenry and in accordance with due process of the international law and conventions of which Nigeria is a signatory."

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