

# When a funeral turned bloody in Kaduna



■ Caskets bearing some of the deceased  
Sunday Isuwa, Kaduna

**F**OR hundreds of mourners who turned out last Saturday for the funeral rites of their traditional ruler at Aduwan Gida in Zango Kataf Local Government Area of Kaduna State, seeing gunmen shoot directly at them was the last thing they ever thought will happen in such a gathering.

Their traditional ruler, Marcus Mutuwa, had died penultimate Friday and Saturday was fixed as the day to celebrate his passage to eternity (Aduwan Gida) as demanded by the community's custom for aged persons.

In the afternoon of that day, hundreds of people attended the burial ceremony that went with a lot of funfair. The ceremony was extended to the night for people to merry in a party called Aduwan Gida, which was organized to celebrate the passage of an aged person to his ancestors.

While the ceremony was going on, a group of gunmen invaded the party in commando-like styles and opened fire on the mourners. The gunmen numbering about 10 shots sporadically at the mourners for few minutes and disappeared.

Witnesses said six mourners were killed. Among those who died was a six-month-old baby with gunshot wounds on the head and stomach, while many other persons at the event sustained gun injuries.

Speaking to Weekly Trust on his hospital bed, Alfred Patrick (16), said the gunmen stormed the venue at around 9 pm.

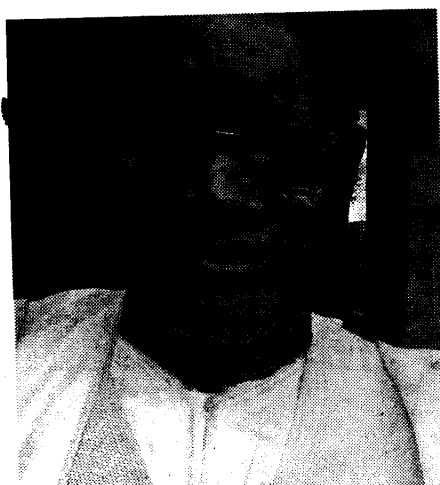
"I was shot on the leg and was not aware because we ran for our lives after hearing gunshots. I got home only to realize that I was shot and that is all I can remember until I found myself in a hospital," Patrick stated.

At the St. Louis Hospital Zonkwa, a 45-year-old mother of eight children, Cecilia Elisha, said: "I left the house after the afternoon burial ceremony and came back to meet people dancing. We decided to stay outside due to heat and about 30 minutes later, there were sporadic shootings," she said.

Cecilia said the victims including herself were rushed to St Louis Hospital, while six others were taken to the Jos University Teaching Hospital.

Exodus Ishaku (16), who witnessed the incident, told *Weekly Trust* that the gunmen came out from a building that was used as a police outpost in the area.

"When we heard the sound of the gunshots, we hid ourselves and saw how the gunmen were shooting people but couldn't help. After a while, we jumped on our bike and rushed to another Rebvock community to get help. Before we came back, they had gone. They came out from an old building that was used as a police station and went to the house the party was been hosted



■ District head of Aduwan, Yariock Kabantyock

A victim, Barnabas Luka, who was hit by a bullet on his hand, said his best friend who was standing close to him was killed by the gunmen.

"We were standing and they came through the back of the house to shoot at us. One of the bullets hit my hand but my friend Yacham was killed," he said.

Bala Soul, a resident of the area whose 19-year-old brother was also killed, said he saw the gunmen earlier in the day.

"The same people we saw in the daytime during the burial came back at night to join the youths to celebrate the life and time of the village head, only to turned round and kill them.

Our reporter gathered that some of the deceased persons killed at the venue of the funeral rites were from the neighbouring communities of Aduwan, Madobiya, Rebvock and Fadan Kagoma.

The District head of Aduwan, Yariock Kabantyock, said the attack on the mourners was annoying but called on his subjects to remain calm and take everything in good faith.

The traditional ruler said the incident was reported to government, adding that the governor visited the scene Tuesday to assess the damages caused.

"What we heard from people at the scene of the attack was that the gunmen came wearing black attires and said Aduwan has not seen anything yet that they will finish us," he said.

The paramount ruler of Bajju, the Agwam Bajju, Mal. Nuhu Bature, also called for a lasting solution to the problem.

The President of Southern Kaduna Peoples Union (SOKAPU), Dr. Ephraim Goje, told *Weekly Trust* that the attack at Aduwan was the 25th incident and has claimed over 100 people since the April 2011 post-election crises.

He warned that the union may not be able to control the youths of the area if another attack