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# Scores killed in Shiites, security agents clash

By Habibu Umar Aminu (Katsina) & Idris Mahmud (Funtua) Rakiya A Muhammad, (Sokoto) Aliyu M. Hamagam, (D) | Publish Date: Oct 13 2016 2:00AM

Mob attacks sect members

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Youths vandalize a school owned by the Islamic Movement in Nigeria at Tudun Wada in Kaduna yesterday

Many people are said to have been killed in clashes between security forces and the members of the Shia sect in five states.

In three of the states mobs attacked the sect members, injuring many and destroying their houses, adding another dimension to the crisis.



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The clashes came as Shi'ites were winding up their annual Ashura procession.

The crisis took place in Kaduna, Kano, Jos, Katsina and Sokoto resulting in the deployment of more security personnel to restore order in those places. In Jigawa State the government suspended all forms of processions to forestall confrontation of any kind.

Tension began to rise in some states as the annual historical event approached. Troops surrounded the Shiite Markas in Tudun Wada, Kaduna Tuesday night but the standoff ended without any incident when they withdrew late in the night.

However, the situation escalated and boiled over resulting in the fatal clashes yesterday.

Funtua

A violent confrontation between combined security operatives and members of Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN) popularly called Shiites yesterday in Funtua, Katsina State led to the death of no fewer than nine persons, Daily Trust gathered.

Commercial and social activities came to a standstill as schools and banks closed.

Witnesses said trouble started in the morning when Shi'ite members converged on Shuwaki area of the town in preparation for the Ashura procession around 8am.

Thirty minutes later, about eight Hilux vans conveying security personnel



Scores killed in Shiites, security agents

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barricaded the road where the confrontation ensued, leading to the nine deaths and injuries to many.

A day to this Ashura event, the police had issued a terse statement banning all forms of rallies, processions, gatherings and assemblies under any guise across the state with a warning that any person caught violating this order would be arrested and prosecuted.

Speaking on the issue, the leader of the movement in Katsina Sheikh Yakubu Yahaya condemned the attack, describing it as shameful and uncalled for. He said nine members lost their lives and many others got injured.

“At present, we are getting set to bury our dead members and we demand the release of two corpses taken to the hospitals and later whisked away by security personnel,” he said.

He added that for over 40 years the procession had been taking place peacefully, wondering why the sudden clamp down on the movement by government through security agents.

“Nothing will convince us that we are not being singled out for attack on how we understand and practice the religion, the constitution and laws of the land have given us freedom of worship and association but why is our freedom being trampled upon,” he asked.

On the recent statement issued by police banning rallies and procession, Yahaya said this was inconsequential as the Supreme Court had ruled on that. “You don’t need permission to do that. Even at that, how can you just kill a soul for being part of a procession? This is jungle justice.”

The police authorities were yet to respond to enquiries put forward as the Katsina State police spokesman DSP Salisu Agaisa failed to respond to calls placed to him.

Kaduna

Two people were said to have been killed when angry youth from Tudun Wada, Kaduna South Local Government Area of Kaduna State stormed the house of Mukhtar Sahabi, a Shi’a leader and set it ablaze.

Daily Trust gathered that the sect leader’s house located along Zango road in Tudun Wada, Kaduna was besieged by youth who claimed to have had enough of the activities of the Shiites.

The members of the movement had scheduled a protest to press home their demands for the release of their leader, Shiekh Ibrahim Zakzaky who has been in detention since December, 2015 and the removal of the ban by the state government.

A resident who was at the scene confirmed the incident, adding that the youths, believed to be residents of the area, attacked some members of the Shi’ite sect who were living in the house.

The resident said, “I was wondering what was going on this morning when I saw youths in hundreds setting the house on fire and before the security operatives could come, all of them had gone. We were standing at distance to see what next would happen. Thank God that normalcy has returned to the area.”

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A member of the sect who did not want his name mentioned said the youths picked up a number of Shi'ites and handed them over to the police. "Four women were seized and handed over to the police in Bakin Ruwa. Two people have been confirmed dead so far, although the place is a bit more stable now."

Confirming the incident, the Police spokesperson, DSP Aliyu Usman said the police had not ascertained if any life was lost. He said, "Immediately the report came to us, we drafted our men there to address the situation, but by the time we got there, they had already set the house on fire. The police have cordoned off the area and normalcy has returned to the area. We are investigating the situation to see ascertain the reason why the house was burnt."

Jos

Residents of Anguwan Rogo, a neighbourhood in Jos North local government area of Plateau State yesterday vandalized and demolished a Shiite school popularly called Markaz, apparently in a bid to stop the sect members from performing their annual Ashura procession.

Our correspondent reports that no one was injured but most of the Shiites in the area had fled the community for fear that they would be identified and attacked.

Witnesses claimed that members of a gang' popularly called Yan daba from Gangare, where a similar incident last year led to a breakdown of law had moved into Anguwan rogo in solidarity with the community to perpetuate the mob action on the Shi'ite facility.

Some of the Shiites who usually wear black during their processions were forced to seek refuge in some homes where they were given alternative outfits to change into to avoid identification. The Shi'ite spokesperson in Jos, Baba Idi could not be reached on phone but rumours spread that security agents were on the look out to arrest him.

Operation Safe Haven Media and Information Officer, Captain Ikedichi Iweha yesterday said the attack on the Islamic sect was a community mob action but stressed that men of the taskforce were able to restore order. The Police Public Relations Officer, ASP Tyopev Mathias Terna said the Shi'ites had written to the command on 10th of October asking for cover for their procession and that the police on Tuesday advised them not to go ahead with the procession for fear that hoodlums might take advantage of it to disturb the peace.

Kano

Angry youths and members of the Shi'ite group clashed in Kano yesterday, injuring 17 followers of the Sheikh Ibrahim El-Zakzaky-led Shi'ite group. Confirming the clash to Daily Trust, the Public Relations Officer of the Kano State Police Command, DSP Magaji Musa Majia, said the clash occurred at different locations within the state capital metropolis, including Kofar-Mata, Murtala Muhammad Hospital and around Kano Abattoir. DSP Majia said that the 17 injured members of the group were rushed to the police clinic where they were treated and discharged.



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"We have rescued 138 members of the Shi'ite, mostly women and children and they are still under our custody. There was no death casualty on both sides and normalcy has since returned to Kano," Majia said.

At the Fagge Juma'at Mosque where the Shi'ite group converges annually for their Ashura procession, heavily armed policemen were stationed at major entrances.

Mallam Sa'idu Isa Yakasai, one of the Shi'ite leaders in Kano told Daily Trust that they were attacked by some hoodlums around Kano Abattoir shortly after they had finished the annual procession of Ashura.

"Scores of Shi'ite members mostly adults were injured during the attack. I saw about 10 of our members who sustained various degrees of injury in their head. I was able to rescue many children during the attack. It was a coordinated attack.

"This is quite unfortunate. This is not the first time our people would organize such a procession. It is an annual event not only in Nigeria but worldwide and it is always peaceful. Even this year's procession was peaceful because it was after the procession that the hoodlums attacked our people," he said.

#### Sokoto

A man thought to be a member of the Shiite group was yesterday reportedly and his vehicle burnt down by youths believed to be hoodlums at Tudun Wada area of Sokoto.

Commissioner of Police, Sokoto state, Mohammed Abdulkadir confirmed this while Briefing journalists on the incident. The deceased was said to have come from Kebbi state to participate in Ashura procession in Sokoto but was killed before reaching Tamaje where the procession started. Abdulkadir said the situation would have degenerated into a serious security problem but for the quick intervention of the police.

The commissioner assured the people of the state that the command would leave no stone unturned in maintaining peace and order in the state.

He said one man was arrested and a cutlass was recovered from him.

He also said three motorcycles were set on fire by Shiite members at Tamaje area in Dange Shuni local government area.

#### Dutse

In Jigawa State the government suspended all forms of public processions indefinitely, according to a statement by the Secretary to the State Government, Adamu Abdulkadir Fanini.

It added that the measure became necessary in view of the security situation in the North central geo-political zone of the country.

It said Governor Muhammad Badaru Abubakar approved the suspension of all public processions of whatever nature in all parts of the State.

The statement called on all law abiding citizens in the state to go about their normal business.

