

FEATURE

Katsina Protest ‘Gone Wrong’

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TIJJANI IBRAHIM, KATSINA



On Monday, September 28, 2020, some youths in Jibia area of Katsina State staged what was supposed to be a peaceful protest over what they called ‘the rising spate of kidnappings and insecurity in their community’.

It, however, turned out not as they expected.

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The protest turned violent as the protesters had a clash with security agents which led to the death of one of them while others were injured.

A police outpost station and immigration office were razed during the protest, which led to a number of youths being arrested, including those who were not present during the

violent demonstration, as alleged by some residents of Daddara village.

When Daily Trust visited some of the affected villages, residents gave their account of the unfortunate incident which took place in Magama, Dan Arau, Nasarawa, Kwarare, Garin Liman, Kukar Babangida and Daddara villages.

At Jataka village, where one person allegedly shot by the police was said to have lost his life, our reporter met mourners and sympathizers who came to commiserate with the family of the victim.

The deceased, Muhammad Badamasi, 29, was said to be a father of three who left behind two wives – one of whom was 9 months pregnant, according to family members who said they don't know yet if the other wife was also pregnant.

His brother, Muhammad Bashir Salisu, told our reporter that he was shot by the police in the stomach and he died on the spot.



Corpse of Muhammad Badamasi

“When they discovered he was dead, they quickly left the place and we rushed towards the corpse.

“At that time, I didn’t know it was my brother who was shot dead,” he said.

Salisu said he took his brother’s corpse and deposited it at the Daddara police station, telling them “here is the person you have killed.”

“They rained abuses on me, questioning why I brought the corpse to them, and I told them it was because they were responsible for his death.

“I dropped him there and came back home,” he added.

He said later in the day, when the policemen had deserted their station that they went and brought the corpse home and buried him in accordance with Islamic rites.

A resident of the village told our reporter that the villagers were overwhelmed by the activities of bandits who visit the villages on daily basis without any help from security agencies.

“For over 30 days, these thieves have been terrorizing our villages every night, carting away all our belongings and sexually abusing our wives and daughters.



Mount Troupe station destroyed by protesters

He said Daddara, Bugaje, Gangara, Yan Gayya, Falale, Jaja and Kanwa among many other villages were ransacked by the bandits.

He called on the authorities concerned to look into their plight and come to their aid.

At Daddara village where the protest was worst, residents confirmed that a police station was vandalized, a Mount Troupe police quarters was also burnt, an outpost of the joint border drill was attacked with three guns burnt.

Residents also confirmed that 43 persons were arrested, alleging that majority of them were not at the scene of the protest.

Malam Bala Ibrahim, a resident of Daddara, said the police met him in his house and attempted to arrest him, hitting his hand severally and injuring him, but he resisted the arrest, saying he cannot be arrested in the presence of his family members for an offence he did not commit.

They eventually left the house without taking him along.

Another resident, Malam Sani Usman, said, “Two of my children were arrested and I swear by Allah, we were at home when the protest took place.

“As soon as we returned home, we saw the police running towards us and they just arrested the young boys.

“One is 16 and the other 18 years of age.

“They told me that as an elderly person, they will not arrest me but they would go with the children, and they are still with them.”

He called on the police authorities to conduct proper investigation in order to release those who were innocent among the arrested people and punish the culprits.

While speaking with Daily Trust, Mustapha Sanusi, the spokesperson of the Daddara Village Head, Gadadiman Daddara, said the protest was neither organized nor participated by the people of the village.

“It was organized by people from our neighbouring communities – about 21 villages who were attacked by the

bandits.

“They converged here on Saturday and the authorities were aware of their gathering.

“They spent two days and on Monday they began the protest.

“Initially, the police tried to calm them down, but they eventually overpowered them.

“Some of them were carrying machetes and others sticks. They burnt tyres and set some places on fire,” he said.



He said after a while, the police got reinforcement and began to shoot in the air and arrest people indiscriminately.

He also called on the authorities concerned to conduct proper investigation, saying majority of those arrested were innocent.

He said he knew of a driver who just arrived from Lagos, and was arrested while waiting for his brother to come and take him home.

In a statement, the Police spokesperson in Katsina, SP Gambo Isah, confirmed the death of one person and the arrest of 43 rioters “who burnt down Police Border Control Post, Nigerian Immigration Post and vehicles at Daddara village, Jibia LGA of Katsina State.”

He said, “On 28/09/2020 at about 08:30hrs, the Command received a report that some groups of disgruntled youths and adults, mainly from Daddara village, Jibia LGA of Katsina State, came out in their numbers, tumultuously rioting and protesting.

“The angry protesters were reported to have blocked the Katsina-Jibia Highway, exactly at Daddara village, smashing and destroying vehicles of security agencies and that of innocent citizens passing along the highway.

“They also set ablaze a Police Border Control Post – Daddara, Nigerian Immigration Service Check point – Danmasani, one Police Border Patrol Van (stationery), one Volkswagen Gulf III motor vehicle belonging to the officer in charge of the police border post, two AK 47 rifles belonging to Joint Border Drill Forces, one Ak 47 rifle and a pistol belonging to Police Mounted troops,” Isah has said.



He added that the rioters smashed and damaged the windscreen of many vehicles of innocent commuters passing through the highway.

“Consequently, the Command swiftly deployed teams of Police mobile Force (PMF) and conventional units to the area and have succeeded in arresting 43 persons found rioting.

“The teams have brought the situation under control as normalcy has returned to the area.

“But sadly, one person lost his life during the fracas.

“Investigation revealed that the riot was purportedly sponsored by smugglers and their agents targeting joint border patrol personnel and their facilities.

Isah added that investigation was ongoing with a view to arrest more of the perpetrators and their sponsors, saying

the Commissioner of Police, Katsina State Command, CP Sanusi Buba, had promised to bring all perpetrators to book to serve as deterrent to others.

Isah, however, noted that: “As soon as we concluded our investigation, we will charge those who are found guilty to court, while those who are proved to be innocent will be released to their families,” he said.



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