

# Blasphemy: 1 Killed, Many Injured As Protesters Go Berserk In Sokoto

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Sultan Palace guarded by security operatives yesterday

By [Our Reporters](#)

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At least one person was killed and many others injured Saturday as police quelled violence that erupted after a mob seized a protest in Sokoto in demand for release of suspects arrested in connection with the lynching of a student of Shehu Shagari College of Education Sokoto, Deborah Samuel over blasphemy against Prophet Muhammad.

Some youths took to the major streets of Sokoto metropolis Saturday morning demanding the

release of the two suspects arrested by the police in connection with the killing of the sophomore.

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Deborah was killed by fellow students on Thursday over the alleged blasphemy.

The protest, which was initially peaceful, started at the Zabirah Mall roundabout around 9am, and the protesters who were few in number at the time were armed with placards with different inscriptions.

Some of the placards read "Release our Muslim Brothers", "Muslims Are not Terrorists", among others.

However, as the protest lingered, the number of protesters swelled with some of them riding on their motorcycles, chanting "Allahu Akbar" (Allah is great).

Our reporter learnt that information about the planned protest circulated on social media platforms on Friday night.

From the roundabout the protesters headed to the palace of the Sultan Muhammadu Sa'ad Abubakar but were blocked by a team of joint security operatives who used tear gas canisters to disperse them.

Our reporter, who went to the area, saw the road leading to the palace littered with broken bottles and stones, just as bonfires were set in different places along major metropolitan roads by the protesters.



A protester injured

*Daily Trust on Sunday* also gathered that well-armed security operatives were drafted at strategic places to maintain peace and order and they were led by the Commissioner of Police in the state, Kamal Okunlola.

One of the protesters told *Daily Trust on Sunday* that many people sustained gunshot injuries around the

Sultan's palace with many shops looted at the popular Emir Yahya Road. Some vehicles were also destroyed by the mob.

The Catholic archbishop of Sokoto, Bishop Mathew Hassan Kukah last night debunked rumours that his house was razed by the protesters. Speaking to *The Cable*, The cleric said the social media rumour was not true.

Teams of policemen were also seen guarding religious places and other important places in the metropolis with shops around Ahmadu Bello Way and other parts of the state closed down.

### **Tambuwal declares 24-hour curfew**

In response to the violent protests, Governor Aminu Waziri Tambuwal has announced a 24-hour curfew in the state's metropolis.

In a state-wide broadcast, the governor noted that the decision was necessary in order to restore law and order in the state.

The statement read "following the sad incident that happened at the Shehu Shagari College of Education on Thursday and sequel to the developments within (Sokoto) metropolis this morning till afternoon, by the powers conferred on me by sections 176(2) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria; and section 1 and 4 of the Public Order Act; and, also Section 15 of Sokoto State Peace Preservation Law, I hereby declare, with immediate effect, a curfew within metropolis of Sokoto township for the next 24 hours.

"I appeal to the good people of Sokoto State to kindly continue to observe law and order and calm down (on the) restiveness currently pervading in the metropolis.

"Everyone should, please, in the interest of peace go back home and observe this measure, with a view of the reestablishment of peace, law and order in the state.

"It is not in the interest of anyone for us to have a breakdown of law and order. I, therefore, appeal for restraint; and, for people to observe and respect the rule of law. Thank you very much," he concluded.

### **How to avert blasphemy – Clerics**

*Daily Trust on Sunday* gathered that during the governor's meeting with the Chief Imams of Juma'at Mosques on Friday, the clerics unanimously advised the government to make a law at the national and state levels which would prohibit any act of blasphemy in the country.

One of the clerics privy to the meeting, said the clerics also suggested that the law should stipulate a capital punishment like death sentence for violators, saying this would discourage people from making blasphemous comments.

The clerics also advised that students admitted into tertiary institutions must write an undertaking to respect one another's religion.

### **We're on top of the situation – Police**

The Commissioner of Police in the state, Kamal Okunlola, who spoke with *Daily Trust on Sunday* said the security agencies were on top of the situation.

"We are working assiduously to restore order across the metropolis. This is why our men are everywhere," he said.

He appealed to the general public to give peace a chance and to remain indoors due to the curfew imposed in the state.

### **Kaduna bans religious protests**

Kaduna State Government has banned religious protests following the breakdown of law and order in Sokoto State after the killing of a student of Shehu Shagali College, Deborah Yakubu I for alleged blasphemy.

*Daily Trust on Sunday* reports that the Kaduna State Government on Saturday said the State Security Council, had placed a ban on protests related to religious activity throughout the state with immediate effect.

In a statement issued by the Commissioner of Internal Security and Home Affairs, Samuel Aruwan said the prohibition becomes imperative in view of moves by some unpatriotic elements to organize series of for-and-against protests related to a security development in one of the Northern Nigerian States.

"Governor Nasir Ahmad El-Rufai who has been briefed of the development, has charged security agencies to ensure strict enforcement of this ban against any form of religious protest in the State," he said.

He said the governor also charged religious leaders, community leaders and traditional rulers throughout the state to complement the efforts of government and security agencies towards the maintenance of peace and stability.

"Security agencies have thus resolved that any attempt by individuals or groups to disrupt the peace and stability of the State, by way of religious protests, will not be condoned. Such protests will be promptly halted, and conveners prosecuted."

### **CAN call for national protest over killing**

The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) has called for a nationwide peaceful protest over Thursday's gruesome murder of Deborah Samuel in Sokoto State.

CAN's General Secretary, Joseph Bade Daramola, on Saturday in a letter on Saturday said the peaceful protest would take place on Sunday 22 May.

The letter was addressed to all block leaders, zonal chairmen, state chairmen, local coordinators, denominational and church leaders.

"I have been directed by the CAN President, Dr. Samson Olasupo Ayokunle, to request all Church leaders, through your various churches to organize a peaceful protest in honour of one of our daughters, Deborah Yakubu who was gruesomely murdered on Thursday, 12 May, 2022 at the Shehu Shagari College of Education, Sokoto in Sokoto State by some Islamic extremists.

"The protest will take place on 22 May, 2022 in the afternoon by 3:00 Pm in every Secretariat of the Christian Association of Nigeria nationwide and not on the streets in order to avoid further loss of lives. Those without CAN's Secretariat may use any church with big premises.

"We are to hold placards with some succinct message like 'we demand justice 4 Deborah', 'no more killing in God's name', 'Enough is Enough', 'Police, stop unprovoked killings in Nigeria', 'Christians are not second-class citizens', 'Killers of Deborah must be prosecuted', 'we condemn religious killings'," the letter reads in parts.

He also urged Nigerian Christians in diaspora to join the peaceful protests using the nation's embassies all over the world.

He said, "The occasion can also be used to pray for Deborah's family and friends, peace for the country, victory for the Church and godly political leaders in the coming general election."