

Kaduna village massacre: Protesters besiege N/Assembly, Zaria

● Northern govs, Ahmadu Bello Foundation, others react

● Tinubu fails to visit, delegates minister

By Saawua Terzungwe &
Idowu Isamotu (Abuja) &
Maryam Ahmadu-Suka
(Kaduna)

Protesters yesterday stormed the National Assembly premises in Abuja, over the killing of many innocent citizens by a military drone last Sunday. There were also protests in Zaria over the same reason.

The protesters who besieged the National Assembly entrance gate for over two hours demanded justice for victims of the bombing and asked the Minister of Defence, Abubakar Badaru, to either live up to his responsibility and nip in the bud the current security challenges or throw in the towel.

Daily Trust had reported how over 90 villagers of Tudun Biri in Rigasa District of Igabi Local Government Area of Kaduna State were killed Sunday night when a drone of the Nigerian Army bombed a gathering of residents who were celebrating Maulud.

Addressing newsmen, the leader of the protesters under the aegis of National Youth Council of Nigeria (NYCN) North West Zone, and Arewa Youth Movement, Nasir Ishaku, demanded justice for the victims.

He said the killing of innocent Nigerians, especially in the Northern part of the country "daily" was unacceptable and can't be tolerated anymore. Ishaku urged the National Assembly to probe into the Sunday killing in Kaduna and take decisive action to save the country.

He said, "For those who have eyes to see, let them see well, and those who have ears to hear, let them listen attentively. Nigeria is not well because Nigerians are being killed day by day."

In Zaria, the protesters marched across the town, with placards in their hands, some of which read, "Justice for



■ The protesting youths

Photo: Abubakar Sadiq Mohd

Arewa" "Justice for Igabi" and "Secure North".

Meanwhile, the Northern States Governors' Forum (NSGF) has called for a comprehensive and thorough investigation into the unfortunate bombing of Maulud celebrants by the Nigerian Army in the Tudun Biri Community of Kaduna State.

Chairman of the forum and Governor of Gombe State, Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya, in a statement by his spokesman, Ismaila Uba Misilli, urged the federal government to look diligently into the bombing.

He said the authorities must take prompt and necessary measures to not only address the immediate concerns of the victims and the affected community, "but also to prevent any future occurrences."

He emphasised that while the fight against banditry and terrorism remains crucial, "it must be executed with the highest level of professionalism and care to prevent such heart-wrenching accidents."

Similarly, the Sir Ahmadu

Bello Memorial Foundation (SABMF) has said that the inability to distinguish and protect innocent civilians during military operations is a grave violation of human rights and the rule of law.

The Director General and Chief Executive Officer of the foundation, Engineer Abubakar Gambo Umar while reacting to the bombing in Tudun Biri community in Kaduna, which claimed the lives of many in a statement demanded that the Nigerian authorities ensure that all those involved in this unforgivable act face the full force of the law.

While condemning the attack, he called for a thorough and detailed investigation into the 'appalling' incident saying, "Those responsible for this dastardly attack must be identified, held accountable and brought to justice. We demand that the Nigerian authorities ensure that all those involved in this unforgivable act face the full force of the law."

He then extended the

foundation's condolences to the families and loved ones of the victims and stood in solidarity with the people of the Tudun Biri community, Afaka, and the entire Kaduna State during this trying time.

"It is high time for the military to take decisive action to punish erring members and ensure that such tragic incidents do not occur in the future. The safety and security of innocent civilians should be the utmost priority of our armed forces and any actions to the contrary must be met with swift and appropriate consequences."

"We urge the relevant authorities to act swiftly and decisively to prevent the recurrence of such a heartbreaking incident and to ensure that justice is served," he said.

Similarly, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) said it is alarmed by the killing of over 90 Nigerians during the bombing in Kaduna State.

The party in a statement on Wednesday by the National Publicity Secretary, Hon. Debo

Ologunagba asked the federal government to immediately institute a system-wide investigation to unearth what transpired.

Ologunagba said: "Our Party also demands that the federal government declares a day of national mourning in memory of the dead."

On his part, the Deputy Senate President, Barau Jibrin, described the incident as unfortunate and called for a thorough investigation into the incident as directed by President Tinubu.

In a statement by his media aide, Ismail Mudashir, the deputy Barau prayed Allah to grant the victims Jannatul Firdaus and provide their families the strength to bear the irreparable loss.

While urging the security forces to thoroughly scrutinize the matter, he appealed to the relatives of the victims and good people of Kaduna State to remain calm.

Tinubu delegates minister

Over twenty-four hours after returning from the climate change summit (COP28) held in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates, President Bola Tinubu was yet to visit Kaduna over the bombing.

Tinubu sent a federal government delegation led by the Minister of State for Defence, Bello Matawalle, who condemned the incident, describing it as "unfortunate."

"We are not going to relent in our fight against terrorism because these criminals must be defeated," Matawalle was quoted in a statement issued by the spokesman of the defence ministry, Henshaw Ogubike.

According to him, the president had directed that he lead a high-level delegation to pay a condolence visit to the good people and government of Kaduna State over the sad event as well as the concerned families of the victims both those who died and the ones receiving treatment at the hospital.