

Cultism Police take over Makurdi streets

Armed police have taken over streets in the metropolis of Makurdi, the Benue state capital, to avert a likely crisis over Tuesday's killing of a teenager by a group of youths suspected to be cultists.

The state's police command headquarters, Wednesday, responded promptly to the killing of Audu Ladan as a special team embarked on a manhunt and arrested nine suspects in the process. The group, who allegedly stabbed and shot dead Audu Ladan in the Wadata section of Makurdi, was paraded at the command's headquarters by the police.

The police commissioner, Mr. Ibe Aghanya who briefed journalists, gave their names as Alechenu Ochenu, Isaka Obaje, Dan Asabe, Mohammed Atiga, Chukwudi Odenu, Ugenius Ebaje, Samson Ochelufi, Abubakar Adams, Abu Adayi, Sunday Yakubu, Tochukwu Godwin and one Dan.

Shortly after the briefing, armed policemen were deployed to major streets, particularly in the Wadata section where tension was mounting as youths took to the streets demanding justice for the murdered teenager.

The development, which began Wednesday evening, saw the residents going to

From Hir Joseph, Makurdi

bed as early as 8pm as canisters of gas were shot sporadically to chase away hoodlums who wanted to take advantage of the situation to cause mayhem.

By daybreak of yesterday, movement was restricted in some parts of the city, particularly Wadata, as armed policemen were still stationed at strategic locations to return normalcy to the area. This lasted to noon when it became clear that the mounting tension was completely doused.

The command's PPRO, Samuel Jinadu, told *Daily Trust* that the police would continue to be on alert to restore peace.

Police Commissioner Ibe Aghanya disclosed that the suspects would soon be charged to court for culpable homicide. He said all the suspects were regular 'visitors' to the state's police command as criminals, even though some of them claimed to be students.

The police also displayed items recovered from the suspected cultists. These included axes, daggers, knives, locally made pistols and some rounds of ammunition, as well as the bus with which the assailant were caught in.

In a related development, the command has paraded

four suspected criminals who have been allegedly terrorising the state capital for sometime now.

Ibe Aghanya told newsmen Wednesday that the four-man gang was arrested earlier in the day when they went to seize a primary school in Makurdi (name withheld) to hold a meeting.

Aghanya disclosed that he received a distress call when the suspects besieged the school and forced both teachers and students to vacate.

He said he immediately deployed his men to the scene and got them arrested. He said the detainees were suspected for the recent killing one Mr. Uba.

Activities of illeg distributors both

The Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN) has expressed concern over the distribution of drugs by quacks in Taraba.

Its chairman, Mr Joseph Magaji, said in Jalingo yesterday during the state's pharmacy week that the situation was compounded by lack of a pharmaceutical manufacturing industry and reputable importers.

Magaji explained that about 80 per cent of drugs reaching consumers in the state came through unskilled personnel who went into drug distribution for the sake of money.

"This is again compounded by the acute shortage of pharmacists in both public and private sectors of our economy.

"The consequence is that our drug distribution system at the moment does not guarantee 100 per cent

wholesome drugs, especially when such drugs are bought from non-pharmaceutical outfits," he said.

The chairman announced that the society would employ relevant information from NAFDAC and the PSN's national headquarters in Abuja to check the proliferation of unwholesome drugs in the state.

He said the society would establish a model depot in Jalingo for genuine drugs from reputable manufacturers and importers, and in turn distribute them to other outlets on a non-profit basis.

Magaji noted that a company, Co-pharm Multipurpose Cooperative Society Ltd, has been registered with the Ministry for Cooperative and Social Welfare, and called on government and individuals to support it.

Another measure taken, he said, was the invitation of