

Soldiers, police invade Kaduna as crisis escalates, several persons feared killed

From **Saxone Akhaine** (Kaduna) and **Emeka Nwachukwu** (Lagos)

- **ACF condemns violence, laments North's backwardness**
- **Air Peace suspends flight operations, NYSC stops orientation for corps members**

SEVERAL persons were feared killed as renewed crisis escalated in Kaduna in what some residents described as an invasion by fake military personnel, who took over parts of the city yesterday.

This followed tensions, which continued to pervade Kaduna in spite of the 24-hour curfew imposed by the state government over the crisis that broke out on Sunday.

The Guardian learnt that the deceased victims have been deposited at the Garmna Awan General Hospital, Kakuri and Saint Gerald Catholic Hospital where scores of victims were admitted.

Besides, violence also erupted in other parts of Kaduna till early hours of yesterday, especially in the Narayi suburb, where the 'fake' soldiers reportedly shot residents.

The attackers, who were on military uniform, allegedly

invaded the Narayi Community early yesterday morning and opened fire on some young men who were on guard in the area.

An eyewitness said the young men mobilised themselves to prevent any intruder from entering the community because of the curfew.

"We could not sleep last night because of the gunshots. Some young men were guarding the major road leading to Narayi to avoid attackers from penetrating but early this morning, some soldiers in white Hilux van came here pretending to be on patrol.

"They opened fire, killed many of the youth and left with some of the corpses but returned to dump three of the bodies this morning.

However, some of the youths have mobilised for reprisals, as the area

remains in tensed mood, while the Narayi area has been deserted.

Cases of killings were also reported in some parts of the state in the night while the curfew was in place.

However, Samuel Aruwan, spokesperson to Governor Nasir El-Rufai, has dispelled rumours that the curfew imposed by government as a result of killings in the metropolis has been relaxed from 12noon to 4pm, insisting that the 24-hour curfew was still in force.

Also, several youths were sighted in Kakuri, Tudun-Wada, Unguwar Boro, Barnawa, Narayi moving freely on major roads and streets, but commercial activities were grounded as banks and other business outfits were shut.

Reacting to the Kaduna crisis, the Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) condemned the violence in Kaduna, saying persistent crisis in the North was responsible for the backwardness of the

region and the nation at large.

It, therefore, urged the military and government to curtail the crisis that started in Kasuwan Magani from further spreading in order to prevent a holocaust.

A statement issued by its National Publicity Secretary, Mohammad Ibrahim Biu, yesterday said: "We are saddened by the spate of communal clashes in some parts of the North and especially the Kasuwan Magani village killings in Kajuru Local Government Area where no fewer than 55 people have allegedly been killed.

But the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) claimed that only 23 persons were killed in parts of Kaduna metropolis on Sunday.

In a related development, Nigerian carrier, Air Peace has temporarily suspended flight operations on its Kaduna route due to the curfew imposed on Kaduna and its environs following vio-

lent clashes. Corporate Communications Manager of the airline, Chris Iwarah, confirmed the development yesterday in Lagos.

He said the airline took the decision after the Kaduna State Government imposed the curfew due to security threats, adding that operations would be restored, as soon as the situation normalises.

Meanwhile, the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) in the state has suspended the commencement of the orientation course for the 2018 Batch 'C' corps members deployed to the state.

The orientation course, which was earlier scheduled to commence, on Tuesday, October 23, has now been postponed until further notice.

In a statement by the state NYSC management yesterday, it advised all affected prospective corps members to remain at home until further notice.

NAEE blames power failure on lack of transparency, seeks NERC's independence