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Soldiers Kill 25 Militants, Arrest 13 In Kano

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(Kano) and
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Soldiers on Wednesday dislodged Muslim fundamentalists in Kano, killing 25 and arresting 13, after several hours of gun battle.

It was the day soldiers in Ibadan arrested two armed men who claimed to be henchmen of Oyo Deputy Governor, Adebayo Alao-Akala, who is also the Governor-elect on the platform of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

Weapons recovered from them included a pump action rifle, one dane gun, one ma-

• Arrest Alao-Akala's Supporters With Pump Action Rifle

Kachalla, Ex-Borno Governor, Dies At 66 - A9

chete, bomb crackers, five cartridges as well as vari-

ous charms.

The fundamentalists in Kano,

suspected to comprise foreigners who have been

terrorising the city for almost a week, have been identified with the dreaded Usama Bin Laden's *Al-Qaeda*.

Some said they came from Chad and Niger Republics.

Soldiers from the 3 Mechanised Brigade, Kano were drafted to Panshekara where the group held sway, after it attacked a police station in the area and killed 10 mobile policemen on Tuesday.

The fundamentalists have in
Continues on A2

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Soldiers Kill 25 Militants, Arrest 13 In Kano

Continued from A1

the past four days killed 20 people, mostly uniformed men.

Their activities generate tension in and around Kano, especially in Panshekara, a village, where they have lived with members of their families since arriving in the city about two weeks ago.

Panshekara residents said the armed men told them that all they wanted from them (villagers) was water as they came with their other needs, including food.

They quoted members of the group as saying they identify with *Al-Qaeda* and that their targets are military men and not the civilian, without giving the reason.

The latest attack brings to 21 the number of people killed by the fundamentalists since they stormed Kano.

The first major strike was on the headquarters of the Federal Road Safety Commission where four officials on guard duty were murdered and their uniforms stolen.

A day later, a police station in Sharada, an industrial area in the city, suffered the same fate, losing two officers. Assorted arms and ammunition were carted away.

The chief imam of Doroyi Jumat Mosque on Bayero University Road, Mamoud Jaffa Adam, was murdered in the mosque and four others

hit by bullets died later in hospital.

The attack that provoked the military onslaught was the killing of 10 mobile policemen.

Deputy Inspector General of Police (Operations), Adedayo Shehu Adeoye, had earlier told journalist that the nature of the attacks and the mode of dressing of the assassins point to the activities of Islamic fundamentalist.

He said eight people were arrested as at Tuesday.

Governor Ibrahim Shekarau has inaugurated a task force to identify those displaced by the incident in Panshekara for possible assistance as the government is considering a temporary settlement for them.

The committee is headed by Information Commissioner, Ibrahim Garba.

Shekarau described the situation as a serious threat to peace and security, but gave an assurance that security has been provided by soldiers and the police.

The period of the curfew imposed on the city has been reduced from the initial 8 p.m. to 6 a.m. to 11 p.m. to 5 a.m.

In Ibadan, the two men arrested - Jelili Adeoye, 18, and Kunle Adewuyi, 26 - were caught in a white Nissan Blue Bird car, marked "Akala for Governor 2007," apparently preparing to launch a fresh at-

tack on an unknown person.

The car was said to belong to Adewale Adegbesan (also known as Adamson), Chairman of National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) Abuja garage unit, Ibadan.

Adeoye said he was picked up by Adegbesan whom he alleged owned the guns and charms in the car.

He confirmed that they are all supporters of Alao Akala.

Army Public Relations Officer, Chris Olukolade, recounted that soldiers at a check point demanded to search the car, but the driver, who is also the owner, escaped and left the two arrested suspects behind.

It was learnt that the arrest of the two men is connected with alleged plans by thugs to eliminate notable politicians in the state before the federal elections on Saturday.

Soldiers have tightened security at check points with sights on sophisticated cars for thorough checks.

The General Officer Commanding the 2 Division of the Army in Ibadan, Major General Mohammed Sanni Saleh, expressed concern over how the arrested suspects quickly got court bail.

He stressed, however, that "we have a duty to check any suspected movement and

fish out those who are a threat to the society. We would continue to do that, and when we do that, we would hand over the suspects along with evidence to the police or the SSS (State Security Service). They have their own responsibility to execute in that respect, and the courts also have their own duty to perform. How they do their own we are not concerned, but we will continue to do our own.

"We will keep vigilance and check all suspicious movements, and where possible we will effect the arrest of any would-be trouble maker.

"We are bordered but those guns are not as sophisticated as the ones we have. Militarily, it does not border me but it borders me because of the security of other Nigerians My soldiers are trained and have better weapons, and we have better tactical handling of situations. But it borders me concerning the safety of other Nigerians because they use this weapons to intimidate or harm them. It also borders me that **probably these** are not the only ones in circulation."

Osun Governor, Olagunsoye Oyinlola and the *Alaafin* of Oyo, Lamidi Adeyemi, visited Saleh on Wednesday to express their appreciation over how the Army quelled the riot that erupted after the elections in the state last Saturday.