

Cleric's killing: Police arrest sect leader

THE Police yesterday arrested the leader of the Shiite Islamic sect in Sokoto, Kasimu Rimintawaye, and 90 of his followers. The Commissioner of Police in Sokoto State, Alhaji Shehu Othman, told *The Nation* that the Shiite sect members were arrested at their base in Sokoto, called Markaz.

He said the arrest followed reprisal attacks between the Shiite and Sunni sects, occasioned by Wednesday's killing of a Sunni Islamic preacher and leader, Sheikh Umaru Danmaishiyya.

Danmaishiyya, 48, was killed by gunmen suspected to belong to the Shiite sect.

The Police chief said: "We arrested the Shiite leader and 90 of his men at their base after their return from an alleged attack on the Sunni base."

He said the Shiite members were arrested for questioning, in connection with the murder of the Sunni cleric on Wednesday and the attack on the Sunni base today.

• Sokoto residents demand for justice • Zamfara govt condemns killing

The Shiite attack on the Sunni base today left one person dead, the commissioner said.

Danmaishiyya's assailants drove in a black-colour car to a popular mosque in Sokoto, where the cleric was billed to deliver a lecture and shot him in the head and hip.

The cleric died in hospital from the gunshots.

However, an unidentified attendant at the mortuary of Usmanu Danfodiyo University Teaching Hospital told *The Nation* that the Police had deposited two corpses there.

"They brought two corpses in their van and they are in the mortuary," he said.

Meanwhile, palpable tension has enveloped areas surrounding the Markaz base of the Shiite sect, as residents fled in droves.

A combined team of policemen and soldiers were patrolling the streets of Sokoto, as majority of residents went

about their normal businesses.

Meanwhile, Sokoto residents on Thursday called on the authorities to arrest and prosecute those behind the assassination of Sokoto cleric Umaru Dan-Maishiyya.

They told *The Nation* that it was the only way to prevent the re-occurrence of "such dastardly acts".

"We demand justice. The killers should be found and killed also," said Malam Usman Hamza, identified as a younger brother of the late cleric.

Hamza disclosed that the deceased had escaped several attempts on his life since 2005.

"So, we, the family members want the state government, the Sultanate Council and the security agencies to do everything humanly possible to apprehend the killers and bring them to book."

An Islamic scholar, Sheikh Mustapha Attahiru, also called for the diligent handling of the incident.

According to Attahiru, "such dastardly act recently took place in Kano where Sheikh Ja'afar Adam was assassinated and nothing was heard of it again."

Another resident, Alhaji Yahayya Yabo, also called for caution in handling the incident, as the deceased had been an Islamic scholar of repute.

"The lives and property of all Nigerians should be paramount. All of us have the right to live and let live," another resident, Ikechukwu Nweze, said.

Meanwhile, there had been calm in the city, following the intensification of security patrol by the military and police.

"We will sustain the tempo," Alhaji Shehu Othman, the State Police Commissioner told *The Nation* over the phone.

"We are happy that the situation has been brought under control," he added.

The late Dan-Maishiyya was

shot on Wednesday night at the Shehu Juma'at Mosque while preaching but died in the early hours of Thursday, July 19.

The Sokoto Sultanate Council, the state government and the security agencies had been making frantic efforts to fish out the culprits and punish them accordingly.

The Zamfara government has condemned the killing of Danmaishiyya.

Addressing a news conference yesterday in Gusau, the state Commissioner for Religious Affairs, Alhaji Tukur Jangebe, described the incident as unfortunate and urged the police to fish out the culprits.

He said the government had held a sensitisation meeting with leaders of different Islamic organisations, Imams and security agencies in the state.

Jangebe said the government had also condoled with the families of the deceased, the Sokoto government, the Sultan of Sokoto and the people of the state.