

Concern over cult killings at Kogi varsity

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Cult-related killings at the Kogi State University, Anyigba continue to put the community on the edge.

The recent killings of some students at the Kogi State University, Anyigba, following cult-related clashes has been generating reactions from stakeholders in the state.

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Anyigba generally had in the past recorded clashes amongst rival cult groups which led to the loss of lives. The latest incident, which occurred within and outside the

university community between November 1st and 3rd left some students dead, thus sparking concerns in the institution.

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Although, earlier information indicated that 13 students were killed following the clashes but the police and the university management have both confirmed that the number of students that were killed was five.

The killings at the university were said to have been ignited as a result of an earlier killing of a kingpin of the Aro Cult group at Kogi State Polytechnic, Lokoja, by suspected members of the Black Axe cult group.

It was learnt that the aggrieved members of Aro at the Kogi State University reportedly went on a revenge mission against their rival group at the institution resulting in the loss of lives.

Giving an account of the incident, the Kogi Police Command in a statement by its Spokesman, William Aya said that on November 1, one Justice Keke, a 300 Level student of Physics Department of the institution was killed on campus after a Theatre Arts production.

He said on November 2, an unidentified corpse was recovered from an undeveloped building behind the university while the next day, one Abdulrahman Usman, a 200 level student of History was killed at his father's lodge by the new gateway at about 0630hrs. Aya said on the same day, two bodies identified as Oloruntoba Godwin, a 400 level student of Geography/Planning Department and

Ajileye Richard, a 200 level Accounting student were seen inside the bush behind Harbor Bay Hotels.

With the guber election around the corner the Kogi State Commissioner of Police reassured members of the public that, the Nigeria Police Force shall deploy all its machinery with an elaborate security arrangement in synergy with other security agencies to provide a secured environment for all eligible voters to exercise their franchise without fear of intimidation and molestation.

The command also said it will deal decisively with any political thug or hoodlum who may want to disrupt the electoral process.

In a similar vein, the management of the University has said that five students were killed during the recent incidents. A statement issued by the Registrar, Yunusa Abubakar, said the report that 13 students of the institutions were killed was inaccurate.

“Contrary to the said reports, the University has a record of the killing of one student on the campus and four others outside the campus, all in mysterious circumstance.

“In a prompt reaction, the university constituted an intelligence committee which has already commenced an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the death of the student on campus and four others outside with a to bring the culprits to book and forestall a reoccurrence of the dastardly act.

“The university would like to assure parents and other members of the public that the situation on campus is very calm and peaceful; and with the regular business of research, teaching and learning going on in full force”, the statement said.

The statement commended Governor Yahaya Bello “for the proactive measure taken in directing the University and law enforcement agencies to collaborate and

unravel the cause of the incident, fish out the perpetrators and forestall reoccurrence.”

The university management assured the governor and members of the public that all legally acceptable methods and procedures will be deployed by the institution to effectively address “the dastardly act.”

Following the incident, the Kogi State Governor issued a 14-day ultimatum to the police and the management of the university to launch a full investigation and fish out all those behind the recent killings at state university.

In a statement released by his Chief Press Secretary, Onogwu Muhammed, the Governor decried the killings resulting from clashes amongst cult groups.

“The governor condemned in its entirety the scourge of campus cultism and the killing of humans, especially students, under any guise whatsoever.

“It is barbaric and unacceptable; we will not handle this madness with kid gloves any more. If a student turns himself into a danger to others in the learning environment, we owe the law-abiding ones and their families the duty of removing such a disruptive individual, and we will do just that.

“We have said it over and over again that the Kogi State Government under my leadership will not condone acts of violence and criminality under any form or guise.

“This administration has invested heavily in the state’s security architecture to ensure the safety of lives and property of the people. Life is too precious to be wasted on petty squabbles by children who are yet to face the world. We will no longer tolerate such under any guise at all”, the statement said.

Governor Bello directed the management of institution to cooperate with the police while enjoining students and the entire university community to volunteer any useful information to assist speedy apprehension of the cultists.

He regretted the deaths while calling on parents and guardians to pay closer attention to the activities and behaviour of their wards.

Also reacting to the incident, President of National Association of Kogi State Students (NAKOSS), Comrade Moses Omeiza described the killings of students as worrisome and urged the warring cult groups to give peace a chance.

He observed that some of the activities were perpetrated by some hoodlums around the university community, saying, the association is liaising with management of the University to hold a stakeholders'/sensitisation forum on the need for youths to stay off cultism.

He commended the state government, the University management and security agencies for measures taken so far to avoid further breakdown of law and order at the university.

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