

Arsonists set Baptist Church ablaze, kill pastor's daughter ...Northern Christians seek govt's intervention

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BARELY one week after an attack on a branch of Living Faith Church, popularly called the Winners Chapel, in Giwa, Headquarters of Giwa Local Government Area of Kaduna State, by two unidentified arsonists, the Baptist Church at Gidan Maso village in Rogo Local Government Area of Kano State has been set ablaze and the residence of the pastor, Reverend Habila Garba, burnt by irate youths.

During the incident which occurred on April 1, at about 7.30 p.m, one of the pastor's daughters died of suffocation and most parts of the house destroyed as a result of the fire.

The president of "Tarayyar Masihiyawan Nigeria" (Hausa, Fulani and Kanuri Christians), General Ishaku Ahmed Dikko, told journalists on Tuesday, in Abuja, that the intention was to kill one youth, Yahaya Joshua, who converted to Islam, but later on reverted to Christianity.

Dikko said the church and all the properties were

burnt down in the presence of the Christian community, despite pleadings for them to stop the destruction. The arsonists gathered cornstalks and put inside the church, in order to aid combustion. This made the action to seem deliberate and for ulterior motives.

He said: "The Christians present exhibited great Christian qualities by

not taking law into their hands by trying to stop them by force. Rather than the arsonists to see reason, they were infuriated, which led to setting the house of the pastor, Reverend Garba ablaze as well. As a result of the fire, one of the pastor's daughters died of suffocation and most of the house destroyed.

"They also attacked and

wounded Bawa Adamu and Aminu Dauda, who received machete cuts, leading to broken arms. Others received similar wounds, but of lesser degrees."

Dikko added that the cause of the barbaric act was to kill one youth, Joshua, who converted to Islam, but later on reverted to Christianity. The youth had escaped on learning of the plan to kill him. They,

therefore, set the church and pastor's house ablaze and went about maiming and wounding any Christian they saw.

"The incident was immediately reported to the police and the District Head at Rogo. As of the time of filing this report, no information was received about the action taken or if any arrest was made.

"However, all the wound-

ed know and can identify their attackers by name since they all belong to the same village," he said.

The Tarayyar Masihiyawan Nigeriya is calling on the authorities to take necessary steps to stem or stop all these harassments and molestations of innocent Christians for whatever reasons.

"We have the right to belong to any religion of our choice and live anywhere in this country. We call on the authorities at all levels to rise up to their responsibilities of protecting lives and properties of every citizen in this country," the group said.

9 suspects still in police detention over presidential election in Lagos

NINE persons arrested in Lagos State for alleged elections related offences on March 28, have remained in police cell without being prosecuted, the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports.

Lagos State police command's spokesperson, DSP



Civil servants resuming duty at the Federal Secretariat after Easter holiday, in Abuja, on Tuesday. PHOTO: NAN

Nigerian troops capture Alagarno in Borno