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# Kaduna market of mayhem: How swarm of bees caused bloodshed

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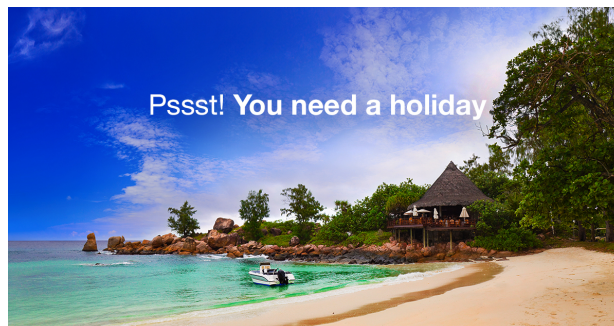
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It was indeed yet again another dark moments for residents of Kaduna State following a crisis which erupted in Kasuwar Magani in Kajuru Local Government Area resulting in the death of over 50 persons. MUHAMMAD SABIU writes on the various reasons for the tragedy and government's efforts to bring normalcy to the affected areas.

Kasuwar Magani Village in Kajuru Local government Area of Kaduna State is gradually turning into a theatre of war. Between February and October 2018, the area had recorded two religious crises which led to the loss of hundreds of lives as well as destruction of property worth millions of naira.



It will be recalled that the February crisis started when a young man was alleged to have converted his Christian girlfriend to Islam. The girl's family, it was gathered, was not happy over the development. A community meeting was held to address the issue but before it was settled, it blew into a religious crisis. Even though that was the immediate cause of the crisis, the underlying fact was that there were other reasons given for the February mayhem.

Checks reveal that the indigenous Adara youths had warned their Muslim counterparts to stop dating the young ladies in their domain since investigations showed that many of the Adara ladies preferred going out with their Muslim friends in the community. But it was learnt that since the order was given after the February crisis, Adara ladies were not bothered, instead they still preferred their Muslim boyfriends.

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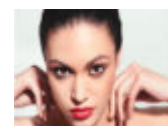
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A disturbed Adara youth who wouldn't like his name on print said "In spite of the warning handed over to our girls to stop this act, you still find most of them maintaining relationship with the Muslim youths. The issue is really part of the problem in our small community."

However, an Adara lady who also pleaded for anonymity confessed that the reason the ladies still preferred other men was the nonchalant attitude displayed by Adara young men in taking care of their fiancées. According to her, the financial benefit derived in such union is the main reason the ladies maintained such relationships, saying "some of us use the money we get from these relationships to buy things we like during our own weddings. Our men don't like spending on the ladies. In fact, some of us spend on our own men from what we get from these friendships."

Thus, the frosty relationship between the two dominant tribes (Hausa and Adara) since February did not improve even with the peace efforts embarked by the state and local governments.

A resident of the area, Mallam Auta Ibrahim, stated that "we lived in peace in the area for decades, but recently the growing distrust and suspicion among us is disturbing."

He said trust which used to be the foundation of their coexistence was no longer there, adding that "if not for our children, the situation would have worsened." He was of the view that last week's crisis, which happened on a market day in the village, could be a spillover of the February crisis.

On that day, traders, as usual, had gathered for business transaction. Nobody had any inkling of what would unfold before the end of the day until



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the crisis erupted and resulted in the death of 55 people. But according to one of the traders who gave his name as Samuel Ibrahim, the crisis had nothing to do with an existing feud among residents of the community. He attributed the crisis to bees which swarmed the market attacking everyone on their path. He said the bees in their large number attacked both traders as well as customers who had come to make purchases at the market. "As people were running from the bees' attack, there was pandemonium and before we knew what was happening, the crisis had erupted," he said.

Speaking in the same vein, a resident of the area, Haruna, also distanced the crisis from any religious or ethnic coloration. According to him, "The crisis was not caused by religious or ethnic reasons. On that day, people had gathered to transact business. It was Kasuwar Magani market day. Around 4 p.m. the market was invaded bees. This forced people to run to avoid being stung by the swarm of bees. In the confusion, the whole hullabaloo turned into a religious crisis due to unwarranted rumours. Unfortunately, some miscreants capitalised on this to cause mayhem resulting in the loss of lives. They also looted shops."

Corroborating the above claim, another trader who pleaded for anonymity, remarked that "I have always visited Kasuwar Magani market for more than two decades. We know ourselves. I don't think traders in the market will resort to fighting themselves. We have a mechanism in resolving our differences should grievances arise. This mechanism has helped in settling our disputes."

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He affirmed that a swarm of bees invaded the market on that fateful day, noting that "around 5 p.m., I saw people running and I had to pack my things and run for safety."

Mary Onyali (M...



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However, in spite of this, another account attributed the crisis to maize thieves who invaded a store in the market. It was gathered that when one of the thieves was caught, there were attempts to give the incident a religious colouration.

In the ensuing drama, there were exchanges between the traders which later escalated into the crisis between followers of the two dominant religions.

Yet another account attributed the crisis to a wheelbarrow pusher who was trying to find a space to offload the goods he was carrying. In that attempt, he unfortunately hit a middle-aged man in the process. The middle-aged man who belonged to another faith started an argument which resulted into the crisis.

Speaking on the crisis, the state police commissioner, Ahmed Abdulrahman, said normalcy had gradually returned to the area even as he said 55 persons lost their lives during the mayhem. He added that 22 people had been arrested just as he promised that the various security agencies would deal with anybody who would cause a breach of the state's peace.

Also, as part of measures to curtail the situation, the state government went ahead to impose a 24-hour curfew in the area. In a statement issued by the governor's image-maker, Samuel Aruwan to justify the curfew, the government maintained that the curfew was put in place to prevent the crisis from escalating to other parts of the state.

However, a day after the mayhem, the traditional ruler of Adara, Maiwada Galadima and his wife were abducted by unknown gunmen, while his orderly and three others in his convoy were killed.

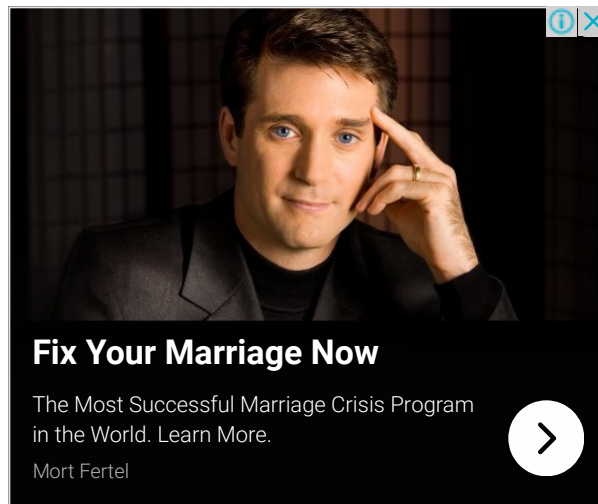
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Findings by the Nigerian Tribune indicate that just as Kasuwar Magani residents were trying to come to terms with the loss of their loved ones, the abduction of their ruler triggered yet another round of violence in the community.

By Saturday, last week, youths in the neighbouring villages of Kasuwar Magani, precisely Kujama and Rido, barricaded the roads. By Sunday afternoon, other parts of the state metropolis like Sabo, Narayi, Gonin Gora, Barnawa, Kawo, Bakin Ruwa, all under Kaduna North, Kaduna South, Kajuru and Kachia local government areas had followed suit. Youths in their large numbers were seen in these areas with sticks and other weapons blocking roads.

In a quick response to the Sunday uprising, the state government extended the 24-hour curfew to Kaduna metropolis and its environs with immediate effect.

According to Aruwan, "reports of the panic had triggered a considerable sense of anxiety as rumours compounded a fraught situation following the violent clashes that occurred in Kasuwan Magani on Thursday." The statement averred that it was based on this premise that the state government "acted to prevent this sense of panic from spreading or triggering any threat to law and order. Therefore, the state government has declared a curfew in Kaduna metropolis and its environs to manage the situation."



Even though as at Monday, normalcy had returned to most parts of the affected areas, there was palpable tension and anxiety among the people of Kasuwar Magani, Kujama, and Rido over the whereabouts of their traditional ruler. A source remarked that the youths still insisted that their king should be found before they would leave the roads.

"So in Narayi, we have retrieved four corpses since the crisis erupted in the state capital on Sunday," the source stated.

However, as of Monday afternoon, fierce looking soldiers and police officers patrolled major streets of Kaduna as well as flash points in order to ensure that lives and property were protected.

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