

Outrage over killing of female student in Sokoto

Govt shuts institution · Sultan, Kukah condemn attack · Police arrest two students
· Tambuwal meets security chiefs, CAN leaders

Olakunle Maruf | Sokoto

NIGERIANS on Thursday took to the various social media platforms to vent their anger, displeasure at the stoning to death and burning of a female student in Sokoto, Deborah Samuel, over alleged blasphemy.

In unsparing tweets, posts, comments, Nigerians condemned the resort by Sokoto youths to jungle justice, self-help, while hash tags: #Deborah trended on Twitter for several hours.

The female student of Shehu Shagari College of Education, Sokoto, was on Thursday killed in a mob attack by students of the institution over alleged blasphemy.

The source said: "She [Deborah] was having an argument with some of her schoolmates over their ongoing examination and when she was asked how she managed to pass her exams, she said it was Jesus.

"She was asked to withdraw the statement and apologise, which she refused to do.

"The school security officers intervened, took her to their post, but they were overpowered by the protesting students who brought her out and killed her.

"After killing her, her body was burnt on the school premises."

Meanwhile, authorities of the institution have closed down the school, just as students have been ordered to vacate the premises immediately.

Also, the state government announced the immediate closure of the institution.

According to a statement signed by the Commissioner for Information, Isah Bajini Galandanci, on behalf of the governor, the state government further directed the Ministry of Higher Education and relevant security agencies to commence investigations into the cause of the incident.

The statement reads: "It has come to the notice

of the Sokoto State government the unfortunate incident that took place at the Shehu Shagari College of Education (SSCOE), Sokoto, in which a student of the college lost her life.

"The government has ordered immediate closure of the college.

"The governor has directed the Ministry of Higher Education and relevant security agencies in the state to commence investigation into the remote and immediate causes of the incident and report back to government."

The statement further said the state governor, Aminu Waziri Tambuwal, has called on the people of the state to remain calm and maintain peace, while assuring that the government would take appropriate actions on the findings of the investigations by the relevant authorities.

Also reacting to the incident, the Sultan of Sokoto, Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar, in a press statement signed on his behalf by the secretary of the Sultanate council, Sa'udu Muhammadu Maccido,

condemned the killing of the student.

The Sultan, in the statement, said: "The Sultanate council has learnt with dismay the unfortunate happenings at the Shehu Shagari College of Education, Sokoto, that led to the loss of life of a female student of the institution.

"The Sultanate council condemned the incident in its totality and has urged the security agencies to bring perpetrators of the unjustifiable incident to justice."

Also, the Bishop of Sokoto Diocese, Bishop Mathew Hassan Kukah, while condemning the act, called on the authorities to investigate and ensure that all the culprits are brought to book.

In a statement made available to the Nigerian Tribune, Kukah said: "The only obligation that is owed her immediate family, her fellow students and the school authorities is the assurance that those who are guilty of this inhuman act, no matter their motivation, are punished according to the extant laws of our land.

"This has nothing to do with religion. Christians have lived peacefully with their Muslim neighbours here in Sokoto over the years.

"This matter must be treated as a criminal act and the law must take its cause."

Meanwhile, the state police command has confirmed the arrest of two persons in connection to the killing.

This was contained in a press statement signed by the command's spokesperson, ASP Sanusi Abubakar, and made available to newsmen, on Thursday.

Abubakar said: "At about 9:00 a.m., a distress call was received from Shehu Shagari College of Education, Sokoto, stating that students were rioting over one female student named Deborah Samuel, a Level Two student who was accused of making a social media post that blasphemed the holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

"Students forcefully removed the victim from the security room where she was hidden by the school authorities, killed

her and burnt the building. The students banded together with miscreants and barricaded the Sokoto/Jega road.

"Upon receiving the information, the DC Operations led a team of policemen and all other operational commanders in the state to the school, where the road was cleared and the situation was brought under control.

"Two students were arrested in connection with the crime committed. The school has been closed down by the school authorities, and policemen were deployed to give tight security coverage."

Meanwhile, Governor Tambuwal has cut short his engagements in Abuja following the killing of the student and returned to Sokoto, where he held a closed door meeting with heads of security agencies in the state, as well as the state chairman of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Reverend Fr. Nuhu Iliya, at the Government House.