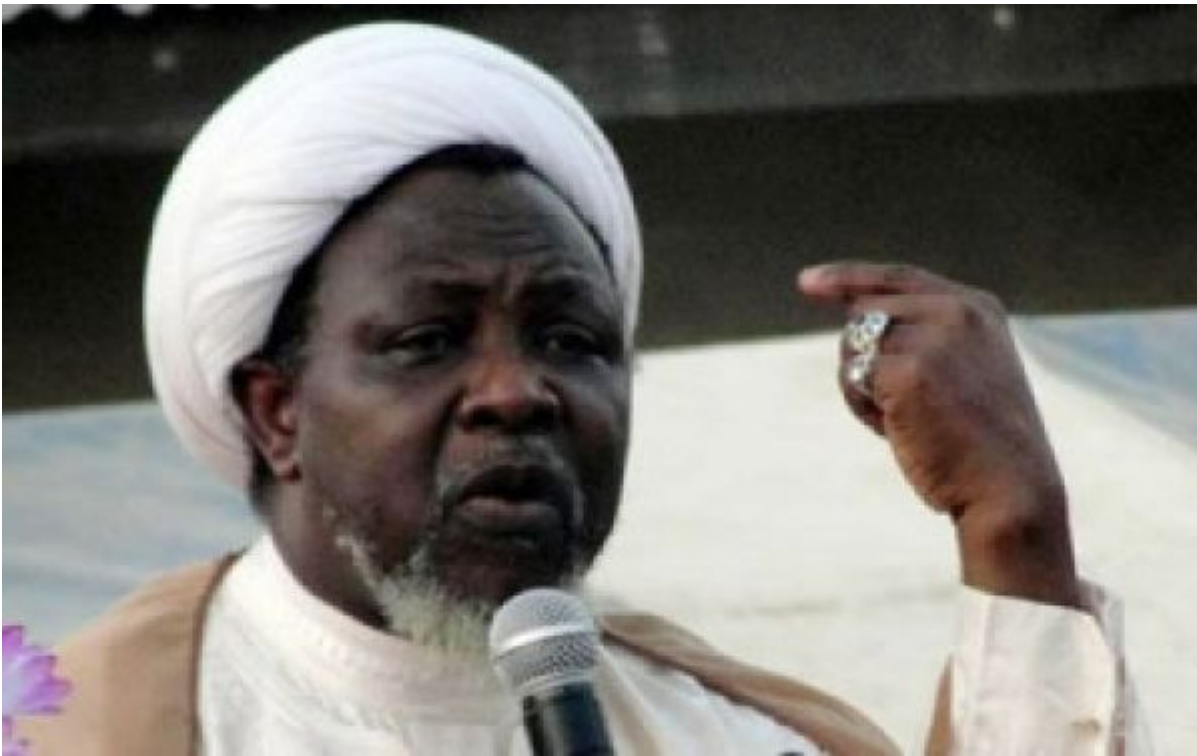


12 die as Shi'ite, youths clash in Katsina, Kaduna states

October 13, 2016



Shi'ite leader, Ibraheem El-Zakzaky

- Troops demolish sect's worship centre in Jos

Jude Owuamanam, Olaide Oyelude, Godwin Isenyo and

Ted Odogwu

Bloody clashes erupted in Katsina and Kaduna states between the members of the Shi'ite Islamic sect and youths on Wednesday, leaving no fewer than 12 persons dead and several others injured.

It was gathered that despite being banned from staging public processions and rallies, the group staged processions in Katsina and Kaduna states to mark the sect's Ashura Day and this sparked off protests by angry youths in the two states.

In Katsina, the clash erupted in Funtua as early as 8am, as the members of the group and youths engaged in a bloody free-for-all.

No fewer than 10 persons were killed in the Funtua clash, which saw many houses and vehicles vandalised.

Katsina State Police Commissioner, Abubakar Mohammed, personally led his officers and men to the scene of the clash in Funtua.

Funtua is a commercial hub in Katsina State.

The Police Public Relations Officer, Katsina Command, DSP Salisu Agasia, confirmed the incident but denied knowledge of any casualty.

"All I can tell you for now is that my commissioner is in Funtua, leading the operation and we are on top of the situation," Agasia said.

Not a few youths in the state were opposed to the teachings of the group, which they consider as extreme.

It could not be established who first drew blood between the members of the group and the youths even as another account of the clash said that it was police operatives that clashed with the members of the group.

The latter account said that it was not youths that clashed with the members of the sect.

Speaking on the telephone, a resident of Funtua said, "There is still booming of guns and property are being vandalised while we are now held up in our various houses. It is not an ethnic clash. The clash is between the Shi'ite members and other Muslims, who are opposed to their methods of preaching. The police are also on the streets but we cannot go out because of fear of attack."

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Commercial driver plying the Katsina-Kaduna-Issa-Lawan Road said he was already a few kilometres to Funtua on Wednesday morning when he was advised against driving through the city because of the incident.

driver said he avoided the Katsina-Kaduna-Issa-Lawan Road and took the Old Sabwa Road instead.

Commercial activities in the city were paralysed while security operatives stationed their vehicles at strategic areas of Funtua.

Kaduna, confusion enveloped the Zango area, where angry youths and the Shi'ite members clashed.

ngo is in the Tudun-Wada area of Kaduna-South. It is one of the flashpoints in the state.

as gathered that two members of the Shi'ite group were killed during the clash.

A source, who did not want his name in print, said trouble started at about 7am when the members of the Islamic group, despite being outlawed in the state, embarked on a procession to mark their Ashura Day.

It was gathered that a team of the state security outfit, 'Operation Yaki', dispersed them.

No sooner had the security agents left than the sect's members allegedly regrouped and descended on the residents, whom they viewed as 'collaborators' with the security operatives.

"The youths mobilised against the Shi'ite group," said an eyewitness, Nura Ibrahim.

Nura said the encounter led to a free-for-all which witnessed the death of two members of the sect.

Also, another eyewitness, who simply called himself Yahaya, said the angry youths mobilised to set the residence of the Kaduna leader of the Shi'ite group, Mallam Mukhtar Sahabi, ablaze.

But a Shi'ite member, Ibrahim Ardo, however, alleged that the youths were sponsored by the state government.

He said the members of the group had been living peacefully within the community until the government incited the youths against them.

101 Kaduna Police Command confirmed the incident.
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Police Public Relation Officer, Kaduna Command, Aliyu Usman, said there were some skirmishes
101 between the youths in the Zango area of the state, adding that no life was lost in the clash.

Meanwhile, a combined team of soldiers and riot policemen on Wednesday swooped on the house of the
ite leader in Jos, Alhaji Adamu Tsoho, and demolished the sect's *Husaniyya* (worship centre).

The members of the sect were said to be gathering at their worship centre located at Angwan Rogo, in
Jos-North Local Government Area of the state when security operatives allegedly swooped on them.

member of the group, Saifullahi Mohammed, who spoke to one of our correspondents, said that the incident happened at about 10am.

The Police Public Relations Officer, Plateau State Command, ASP Terna Tyopev, and the Media Officer of Operation Safe Haven, Capt. Ikedichi Iweha, could not be reached for comments on the incidents.

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