

Islamic sects in free for all in Niger over timing for prayer, 5 dead

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Hell was let loose in Guni, Munda Local Government Area of Niger State, at the weekend, when two Islamic sects engaged each other in a bloody fight, leading to the death of no fewer than five people while several others were injured.

The fracas was said to have broken out between the Darikah and Izala Islamic sects over the timing for the observance of the Jumat prayer and the decision of the Izala sect to have their separate prayer ground in the community.

It was gathered that various dangerous weapons, including sophisticated rifles and Dane guns were freely used, resulting in the heavy casualties.

It was learnt that one of the sects was against the decision of the other sect to have its congregational prayer at 1:00p.m, and therefore tried to stop the members of the sect from saying the prayer that time.

It was at this point that disagreement broke out among members of the two sects leading to the free for all and use of dangerous weapons against one another.

Other worshipers and villagers reportedly scammed for safety with some escaping to Minna and Sarkin-Pawa town.

It was gathered from a source close the community that a large number of suspects were arrested by the police in Sarkin-Pawa and were transferred to the Criminal Investigation Department in the Police Hhadquarters.

The injured were said to have been treated for gunshot injuries in private hospitals in Sarkin-Pawa, the headquarters of the local council, and at Government Hospital, in Gwada town some kilometers to Guni town where the crisis broke out.

The lawmaker in the state's House of Assembly from the area, Mr. Paul John Bahago, and the Commissioner-nominee from the area, Alhaji Danjuma Salau, were in the community, on Monday, to commiserate with the injured.

Bahago described the incident as 'sad and unfortunate,' and urged the people to learn to live in peace with one another.

All efforts to get confirmation from the Police Public Relations Officer, ASP Mohammed Abubakar, were abortive as he refused to pick his calls.