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## Killing in the Name of God

*Religious intolerance rears its ugly head again in the North, resulting in deaths, displacements and shops worth millions of naira*

**By HARUNA SALAMI**

No one can say precisely what caused the religious mayhem in Tudun Wada Local area of Kano State on Friday, September 28, 2007. One version has it that a youth in Government Secondary School, Tudun Wada, drew a pictorial illustration of Propaganda, to illustrate his lecture on founders of religions. He did the same for other works including Jesus Christ in the case of Christianity. However, Muslim students of the school blasphemy. They went on rampage, spilling into town, and leading to the burning of churches and shops worth millions of naira.

Another version has it that Muslims of Tudun Wada alleged that a letter was pasted that Christians would attack them. So, the Muslims had to attack first to forestall the planned attack. However, the result is that the town went on fire.

Be that as it may, the fact remains that religious intolerance of the highest order visited the town, resulting in the death of nine people and the displacement of about 600 others. A visit to Tudun Wada town will draw tears even from a stony heart. An eyewitness at Fire and Miracles Church where a woman was drowned. The church and the residence were completely destroyed. The same fate befell seven other churches in the town. They are Evangelical George's Anglican Church, St. Mary's Catholic Church, Baptist Church, Deeper Life Church and Assemblies of God Church.

The magazine was informed that when the violence started, some people ran to the police station but were turned back by the police who feared that the police station could become a target. Many people to run into the nearby bush. There they were pursued by the mob and many were killed. The pastor of the Assemblies of God Church, Tudun Wada, who was transferred to the hospital, narrated how he narrowly escaped death in the bush. As they were fleeing with children, suddenly the attackers caught up with them. He was brought out with an Igbo man who threatened to kill him. As they raised a heavy iron rod to hit him, his wife and children began to cry. At that moment, the worst was about to happen, he stood with courage to say, "Do you people know God, then spare my life and my children." That was how one of them spared my life, but the other man was not so lucky. The leader ordered that he must be killed right there.

The widow of that man, Mrs. Augustine, now lives at the Igbo Hall, Church Road, where many of whom are wounded. There are about 600 displaced people at the hall.

Bako Gambo, a reverend and retired pastor of ECWA, Dakata Kano, is an indigenous person who was not spared in the violence. Although his house was not burnt, because it is close to the road, it was set ablaze. Bako's son, Dauda, was hidden by his friend. His wife, Ajuji Bako, said the killers searched for Dauda all over the place, asking "Where is the son of the pastor?" She said before burning their belongings, some items were taken away, like the two brass plates and basins were smashed and water poured in the corn flour to render it inedible. She is an indigene of Tudun Wada. Her family house is a walking distance from her husband's childhood home.

Aliyu Mustapha, caretaker chairman, Tudun Wada Local Government area, said the government is providing food and clothing for the victims, promising to do more when the government committee releases its findings.

The Kano State government set up a committee to investigate the crisis, assess the damage and make recommendations. The second objective is to see how the local government will coordinate the relief efforts.

the victims.

Already, the Christian Association of Nigeria, CAN, Kano State chapter, has pointed head, and Saidu Jatau, divisional police officer, DPO, of Tudun Wada, as supporting Wada as they did nothing to stop the crisis. But Mustapha said he tried to bring the assistance of the police. He denied flatly that anyone died that day.

Jatau, refused to talk to the magazine and simply referred the reporter to the police command. But the PPRO was not forthcoming. He told this magazine on phone that he denied too that anyone died as contained in a release by the commissioner of police Sule Ya'u, chief press secretary to Ibrahim Shekarau, the state governor, said he was at the time the incidence occurred. But the government acknowledged that the disturbance build unity in the country".

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