

Angry youths set church, police station ablaze



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Five people were arrested after some angry youths burnt down a Celestial Church and a police station at Bayan Dutse community in Narayi, a suburb of Kaduna metropolis, in the early hours of yesterday. Witnesses claimed that the youth were protesting the death of Friday Sylvester (21), a member of the community working with the pastor of the church.

The protest started on Wednesday and by yesterday it had culminated in the burning of the church and a police station. This came as Governor Nasir el-Rufai yesterday ordered investigation into death of Sylvester, burning of church, police station. The youth accused Prophet Babatunde Shittu, the pastor in charge of the church, of being behind Sylvester's death.

They claimed he the prophet killed the boy for ritual purposes. The youth asked the prophet to come and explain to them the circumstances which led to Sylvester's death. Sensing danger, Shittu rushed to the police station. This angered the youth, who then stormed the police station and demanded that Shittu should be released to them.

The police were able to disperse the youth on Wednesday night before transferring the pastor to the Barnawa Police Station. The youth regrouped yesterday morning and overpowered the policemen on duty. They burnt part of the station before moving to the Celestial Church.

The police authorities revealed that five people had been arrested for allegedly setting the church and the police outpost ablaze at Narayi in Chikun Local Government Area. The state Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), ASP Muhktar Aliyu, said that angry youths, about 4a.m. yesterday, set a church and a police outpost in Narayi ablaze.

He said: “The youth were angry over the death of a boy, who was working as a mason with the prophet of the church. When the incident was reported, we prevailed on the youth and adopted civil and proactive measures to calm them. We rescued the pastor and took him to the police outpost and later to Barnawa Divisional Police Station. Later, the youth came about 4a.m. and set the church and part of the police outpost on fire.”