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THIS DAY**Nigeria: Man's Death Sparks Off Protests**

Wole Ayodele

4 August 2009

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Lokoja — Killing of a middle aged man, Suraju Salisu, by a group of youths in Lokoja, weekend, threw the ancient town into serious pandemonium, which snowballed into a bloody communal clash, as aggrieved youths set several houses and vehicles ablaze in protest.

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Suraju Salisu, younger brother to Alhaji Bala Salisu, former Chairman, Lokoja Local Government Council, was killed along Mount Patti road after being lured by a group of friends who initiated a parley aimed at reconciling him and his assailants.

Suraju, a bouncer at a popular night club in the town lives around the palace of the Maigari of Lokoja, and incurred the wrath of his assailants, who after being denied entrance into the club on Saturday night, vowed to deal with him.

The peace meeting however turned awry, as an argument that ensued between them led to another round of fight, which led to the other group hitting him with several dangerous weapons, which led to his collapse and eventual death.

When the news of his death filtered into Maigari palace, youths in the area, in a reprisal attack, mobilised themselves and staged a march to Kabawa Street, where Suraju's assailants reside and set several houses ablaze when they could not lay their hands on their targets.

As the aggrieved youths continued with the destruction of properties at Kabawa, anti-riot policemen were drafted to the area to restore peace, though the fighting between the youths raged till midnight on Sunday.

Fighting, however, resumed early yesterday when Kabawa youths attacked those that were assigned to dig Suraju's grave at Kabawa cemetery, with cutlasses leading to several people sustaining serious injuries, thereby sparking another round of violent clashes and burning of houses.

Another twist was however added to the cause of the crisis as it was alleged that Suraju was killed by Kabawa youths in retaliation of his attack on the wife of Hon. Yabagi Bologi, Chairman of Lokoja Local Government five months ago.

But in a swift response, Bologi denied any link between Suraju's attack on his wife with the current crisis, noting that the deceased had been reconciled with him several months back and he had gone ahead to include his name in the list of beneficiaries of the monthly youth empowerment initiated by his administration.

Lamenting that this is the first time the Local Government is witnessing such a dastardly act, Bologi however commended security agents for nipping the crisis in the bud just as appealed to the families of the deceased to take the unfortunate incident as an act of God.

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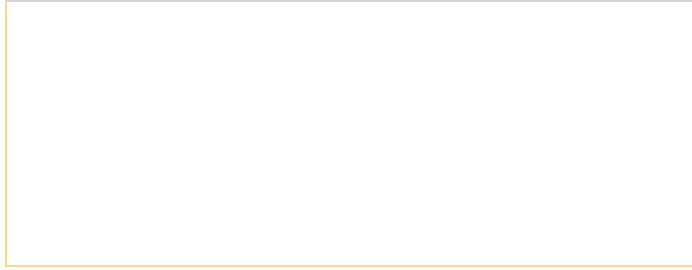
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