

# Five Killed in Taraba Violence as Boko Haram Murders Cleric in Maiduguri

**Wole Ayodele** in Jalingo and  
**Michael Olugbode** in Maiduguri

It was yet another black weekend in the North where Boko Haram insurgency and mutual distrust among ethno-religious groups have become a major threat to public order.

In two separate incidents yesterday in Ibi, Taraba State and Maiduguri, the Borno State capital, some six people were killed.

The quiet town of Ibi was engulfed in an orgy of violence, which claimed about five persons. Many others, whose number is yet to be ascertained, were also injured and property worth millions of naira destroyed in the violence whose root cause is mired in controversy.

For over six hours, the two sides in the combat deployed all available weapons to attack each other and it took the efforts of a combined team of soldiers and police to restore order.

Although there has not been an official report on the cause of the crisis, **THISDAY** investigations revealed that the crisis was triggered by an attempt by a man to drive through a barricade mounted in front of a branch of the Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria while service was in progress and was resisted by members of the Boys' Brigade stationed in front of the church to ensure compliance with the no-drive-through order.

Upon being resisted from driving through, the driver was said to have gone back into the town to mobilise people to attack the Boys' Brigade members.

The situation soon degenerated into a chaotic situation that eventually spread to other parts of the town.

A resident of the town, Mummy Audu, told **THISDAY** that weapons were freely used during the clash, which forced many residents to abandon their homes to take refuge in nearby bushes.

Audu said she saw three corpses on the major road in the town.

Chairman of Ibi Local Government Area, Alhaji Ishaka Adamu, told **THISDAY** in a telephone interview that though the crisis looked like a religious problem, it had a political undertone.

He confirmed that lives were lost in the crisis but he declined to give a specific number, saying: "I can't tell you that so and so numbers of people were killed for now until the situation is totally calm and thank God the situation is getting calm."

Adamu, who also confirmed the setting ablaze of several houses and shops, however declined knowledge of the setting ablaze of churches.

"Some youths have been going round setting houses ablaze but I don't know if churches were burnt or not. What I know is that houses were set ablaze," he added.

The state Commissioner for Education, Mr. Yakubu Agbaizo, who is an indigene of the town, told **THISDAY** that though he was not in the town when the crisis erupted, he learnt that some churches were burnt by some youths.

"I am not in the town now but I learnt that a number of churches have been burnt down but I can't give you

**Some youths have been going round setting houses ablaze but I don't know if churches were burnt or not. What I know is, that houses were set ablaze,**

the figures or details now," he stated.

The intervention of soldiers and riot policemen was, however, able to restore normalcy in the town.

Meanwhile, a retired clergy, Reverend Ilasha Kabura, 70, was yesterday killed by suspected Boko Haram sect in Maiduguri.

It was learnt that gunmen, suspected to be members of the Islamic sect, had invaded the home of Kabura, who shepherded a COCIN church in Maiduguri, in the early hours of the day and shot him dead.

The septuagenarian was shot dead by his assailants in the full glare of members of his family, who were helpless and could not raise the alarm until the killers had left.

A witness said Kabura was shot dead at about 8am while preparing to attend the morning service in one of the branches of the church in the town.

The witness, who craved anonymity, said the gunmen, numbering two, were sighted in front of the cleric's personal family house before they fired several shots on him and fled immediately.

He said initially when he sighted the gunmen, he thought they were Kabura's visitors but he later heard sounds of gunshots some few minutes later and he was told the cleric had been killed.

He added that the Joint Task Force (JTF) operatives later arrived at the scene to take the corpse to an undisclosed hospital in Maiduguri.

Confirming the incident in a telephone interview, the Police Public Relations Officer, Gideon Jubrin, a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), said the gunmen killed Kabura while he was preparing to attend Sunday service.

He said no arrest had been made but security agents had launched a manhunt for the killers.