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31 Killed in Kaduna by Herdsmen after Communities Sign Peace Accord

November 15, 2016

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Kaduna state governor, Mallam Nasir El-Rufai



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- **Police sergeant, eight Shiites killed in Kano 10 sect members arrested**

John Shiklam in Kaduna and Ibrahim Shuaibu in Kano

A day after Kaduna State Governor Mallam Nasir el-Rufai, set up a public apology billboard in Samaru Kataf, 31 people have been reportedly killed in Chawai Chiedom, Kamaru Ward in Kauru Local Government Area of the state.

This came as the Kano State Police Command yesterday confirmed that eight members of the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN) popularly known as Shiites had been killed in the state during the clash between the sect members and the police.



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The governor had while unveiling the public apology billboard in Samaru Kataf of Zangon Kataf Local Government Area last Saturday, promised that the state government would prosecute people who called on locals to defend their communities.

The communities allegedly attacked on Sunday by suspected Fulani herdsmen, were said to have included Ungwan Rimi, Kitakum, Ungwan Magaji and Kigam in Kauru. About 45 houses were said to have been burnt.

Residents, in conjunction with the leadership of the Southern Kaduna Peoples Union (SOKAPU) were said to have compiled a list of the houses that were destroyed and while the death toll was put at 31.

An official of SOKAPU told THISDAY in a phone interview that he was yet to get details of the attack, but promised that a statement would be issued as soon as the facts are made available.

The spokesman of the state police command, Iyus Usman, a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), could not be reached to comment on the attack as his phone was switched off.

Meanwhile, the Kano State Police Command has confirmed that eight members of Shiites have been killed in the state during the clash between the sect members and the police.

The state Commissioner of Police, Mr. Rabi'u Yusuf, said the Shiite members who were armed with bows and arrows, catapults with metals, cutlasses and other dangerous weapons, attacked a police team, killing one police and critically injuring another.

Yusuf told journalists yesterday that "At about 08.00hrs, thousands of Shiite members obstructed motorists and other road users on the Kano -Kaduna Expressway between Kwanar Dawaki and Tamburawa village in Dawakin Kudu Local Government Area of the state.

"The Shiite also attacked innocent citizens, damaged police and personal properties thereby causing mayhem which led to general disturbances of public peace in the state."

He also pointed out that an AK 47 rifle was later recovered and 10 members of the sect had been arrested.

The police commissioner stated that eight of the sect members were confirmed dead by the doctors on call, and the police boss was personally on the ground at the scene of the incident.

According to him, normalcy had been restored and urged the people of the state to report any suspicious person or groups to the nearest police station.

THISDAY in Kano learnt that the officer killed was a police sergeant.

It was learnt that members of the sect had cancelled their trekking from Kano to Zaria over the incident that occurred in Kano.

Reacting to the incident, the spokesman of the IMN, Ibrahim Musa, in a statement made available to journalists, revealed: "There are reports of at least 50 fatalities and hundreds of people injured after a combined operation of the Nigerian Army members of the Department of State Services (DSS) and the policemen opened fire on a peaceful procession making its way to annual 40th day commemorations of Martyred of the Grand Son of Prophet Muhammad (SAWA).

Tear gas canisters were also fired at the procession by soldiers and police on the supervision of members of the DSS who blocked the road along Kwanar Dawaki in Kano State, seeking to stop the procession from proceeding to its destination.

The attacks come despite a letter last week by the Islamic Human Rights Commission (IHRC) to President Muhammadu Buhari demanding that he should act to ensure the protection of those taking part in the annual 40th day commemorations of Ashura next week.

The letter followed credible reports that the military planned to sabotage Arbaeen processions (as they are known) in a continuation of its persecution of the IMN which organises the events.

Meanwhile, the Shiite group has alleged that security forces were planning to attack its members embarking on the symbolic Arbaeen trekking.

At a press conference yesterday in Kaduna, the coordinator of the trek, Nasir Mansur, claimed that there were reports indicating that soldiers had mounted check points at the outskirts of Potiskum, Yobe State and detained a trailer carrying the personal belongings of those going to Kano to kick start the trekking.

He explained that the Arbaeen trek is a religious duty incumbent on all supporters of the household of the Prophet Mohammed as a sign of solidarity.

According to him, "The Arbaeen is not quite new in this country and it is not a creation of IMN. Rather the symbolic trek has been done throughout history and also world wide in various ways."

He disclosed that this would be the fifth time faithful would be trekking to Zaria, the headquarters of the IMN, adding that some Nigerians even travel to Iraq to be able to participate in the trek from Najaf to Karbala.

He said: "In previous years, we faced varying degrees of reactions from government and some people. The increasing participation by millions of people in the trek over the years seem to attract severe opposition from some people and the government.

Some have taken their hatred beyond bounds, which culminated in the detonating of bombs along the Kano route last year killing 23 trekkers."

Mansur alleged further that soldiers were scheming to plant weapons in the luggage and thereafter claim that claim that the bags are for members of IMN. He maintained that throughout the nearly four decades of the existence of the IMN, it has never stockpile, carried or used weapons.

He reiterated the call for the immediate and unconditional release of the IMN leader, Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky, who has been in detention since his arrest following the clash between the Nigerian Army and his followers in Zaria in December 2015.

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