

Kaduna, Yobe crises escalate •Death toll rises to 100 in Kaduna as youths renew attacks •3 policemen killed, 4 schools burnt in Damaturu •24 hrs curfew imposed •IGP deploys more riot policemen •Those behind mayhem should be punished -EU

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CRISES in Kaduna and Yobe states have not abated, even as the number of casualties from Sunday's bombing of three churches and reprisals in Kaduna State has risen to over 100, sources revealed on Tuesday.

Consequently, the state government has reverted to the 24-hour curfew it initially imposed and later relaxed after the situation seemingly improved on Monday.

Fresh attacks which erupted on Tuesday led to the re-imposition of the 24-hour curfew on the state.

It was learnt that the fresh attacks on Tuesday began around Angwar Shanu, near Ungwar Rimi, where sporadic gunshots were heard in the morning.

It was gathered that the violence then quickly spread to some other parts of Kaduna metropolis.

The reversal of the curfew period was confirmed by the state Commissioner for Information, Saidu Adamu.

Adamu also confirmed the renewed attacks. He said security agents had been drafted to contain the situation.

Also, Yobe State governor, Alhaji Ibrahim Gaidam, has imposed 24-hour curfew on Damaturu, the state capital, which has been under intense bombardments since Monday.

The governor directed residents to remain in their homes while officers and men of the Joint Task force (JTF) and other security agencies continue with their efforts to ensure peace and security and the protection of life and property in the state.

A statement from the office of the Special Adviser on Media to the Governor, Alhaji Abdullahi Bego and made available to Nigerian Tribune on Tuesday suggested that the 24-hour curfew directive would apply to Damaturu metropolis only.

According to the statement, restriction of movements in other parts of the state, except Potiskum Town, still remains 10.00 p.m. to 6.00 a.m. daily. Restriction of movement in Potiskum remains 6.00 p.m. to 6.00 a.m. daily.

Governor Gaidam also called on members of the public to continue to give maximum cooperation to the JTF and other security agencies in their efforts to establish peace.

He also called on the people not to relent in their prayers to the Almighty Allah to restore peace in the state and the nation in general.

Nigerian Tribune gathered that trouble started on Monday at about 5.00 p.m. when some sect members went to the house of one of the police officers in the state with the mission to assassinate him.

According to the story, the wife of the police officer who suspected the men, informed her husband, who in turn telephoned his men and the JTF, who stormed the area and engaged the suspected sect members

in a gunfight.

“When JTF gunned down one of the suspects, they took him to hospital, because at that time, he was not dead. We later learnt that while in the hospital, some sect members mobilised themselves and went to the hospital at about 5.00 p.m. and engaged the soldiers in a shoot-out. The situation became fiercer by 6.45 p.m. and it was terrible till this morning. Right now, nobody can go out of his house,” Umar Shu’iabu, a resident, told Nigerian Tribune.

Though, residents gave conflicting number of casualties, Nigerian Tribune gathered that four primary schools were burnt down by the sect members.

On the number of casualties said to include police officers, the Police Public Relations Officer, ASP Salihu Adamu promised to return the calls of our correspondent, saying “I will get back to you.” But since then, his phone had been switched off.

The Yobe State Commissioner of Police, Patrick Egbwuniwe, however, confirmed that three of his officers had been killed while four sustained injuries since the violence began on Monday.

The commissioner said they had no record of civilian casualties as the city was still under siege fire. He said when normalcy returned they would be able to know the number of casualties.

The European Union said people behind last Sunday’s mayhem in Kaduna should be brought to trial and, if found guilty, they should be punished.

EU High Representative, Catherine Ashton, who made the statement in reaction to the incident, noted that the union would renew its efforts in cooperation with the government and citizens of the country to address social and economic problems in the North.

She equally pledged the determination of EU to work with the authorities to make the fight against terrorism more effective in the country.

Meanwhile, the police in Gombe State, on Tuesday, confirmed the killing of Mallam Adamu Mamman, the acting director of security matters, Government House, by unknown gunmen.

The state Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Fwaje Atajiri, told newsmen that the incident happened on Monday at about 7.00 p.m at Kumbiya Kumbiya quarters, Gombe, residence of the deceased.

He said the matter was being investigated and appealed to the public to provide the police with useful information that could lead to the arrest of the assailants.

Speaking with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), son of the the deceased, Garba Inuwa, said he was with his father in front of the house when two men came in a commercial tricycle and fired at his father.

Garba said the attackers shot his father on the chest, stomach and back.

Meanwhile, following the bomb blasts incidents that occurred in Kaduna State on Sunday, the acting Inspector-General of Police, Mohammed Abubakar, has ordered the strengthening of security in and around the state, particularly flash points and highways.

Also, the IGP has deployed more policemen to help strengthen the troops in the state in combating the crisis.

A statement in Abuja, on Tuesday, by the deputy force spokesman, Frank Mba, said the IGP had ordered a 24-hours pro-active and strategic surveillance patrols in Kaduna and other neighbouring states.

In addition, the police authorities were working closely with the state and local governments, religious leaders, traditional rulers and other stakeholders to ensure that a lasting and sustainable peace was attained

In another development, the Senate is planning to enact laws to combat the wave of terrorism in the country.

The senators, who met in closed session for more than three hours, decided to pass stricter laws that would help the president combat the wave of terrorism in the country.

The senators were said to have individually decried the wave of terrorism, especially the trend now being witnessed in Kaduna State, where reprisals had left more people dead, saying that the National Assembly should help the president by enhancing existing laws.

It was also understood that the senators had resolved to meet in a closed door session with President Jonathan to discuss areas of executive input into the proposed anti-terrorism laws.

Sources said each of the senators was called to speak at the closed session, where members usually express themselves free from public glare.

A source in the Senate also said senators discussed the issue of Nigeria's porous borders, adding that there was a proposal to close the borders for six months.

It was gathered that the senators resolved to meet with President Jonathan immediately after he returned from the trip to Brazil.

Senate spokesman, Senator Enyinnaya Abaribe, who briefed newsmen at the end of the sitting, said the chamber met on the Kaduna crisis, adding that it had been discovered that perpetrators were aiming to "fester crisis in the country."

On the House of Representatives bribe scandal, Abaribe said "the senate does not think it has to protect its own image, because it does not think that the image of the National Assembly is in any way affected by the action of an individual within the National Assembly."

The institution of the National Assembly, he said, was intact, adding that "any member who has infringed on the law of the land will answer to it."

On the spate of bombings, he said "our understanding is that some people have been arrested who were foreign nationals and there were insinuation of something coming as a result of civil wars in some African countries from Mali down to this place, but everything we are looking at, we said that despite foreign influence, we must look inward, because we believe that foreigners cannot have access to Nigeria if they don't have Nigerians who are assisting them to do whatever they want to do. Therefore, every aspect of insecurity is being looked into."

Boko Haram attacks: Russia warns against religious war

The government of Russia has warned against emerging pattern of religious strife in Nigeria, describing the trend as "highly dangerous."

In a statement issued on Tuesday, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said "it is inadmissible to infringe on people's freedom of faith."

"We condemn the terrorist attacks in Nigeria. Using people's faith to incite religious strife and extremism is inadmissible and highly dangerous," the statement said, adding that "Russia supports Nigeria's fight against terrorism."

"We send our condolence to those who lost their loved ones and wish quick recovery to the injured," the statement concluded.