

## people&amp;life

INTRIGUING EXPERIENCES

## DEADLY TRIP FROM BORNO FOR NAMING CEREMONY

## Kaduna attackers wanted my head for being 'an infidel' — Redeemed Church pastor

By LUKA BINNIYAT

Old giant trees with fat, twisting trunks that outlived their colonial planters, spread forth their huge branches of green leaves over the Seventh Day Adventist Hospital, Jengree in Bassa Local Government Area, LGA, of Plateau State.

The hospital, said to be over 60 years old, bore all the trappings of colonial structures in Nigeria - simple homes of asbestos roofs with walls made of stones and well spaced from each other; and rows of flower beds all over the place.

In one of the wards, Pastor Emmanuel Danjuma Garkida lay on his sick bed bare-chest, with sunken eyes that seemed to stare at nothing. There was a wide band of bandage on his lower abdomen. The story behind the bandage is a summary of the bloodlet that took place in Saminaka in Lere LGA, Kaduna State, on April 13 and 14 after the 2015 gubernatorial election. In barely audible voice, Garkida, who hails from Borno State, narrated to Sunday Vanguard his close shave with death.

## Naming ceremony

"I come from Borno State, but I am a serving pastor with the Redeemed Church of God, Yobe Province," he stated.

"My wife is a native of Abadawa, Saminaka in Kaduna State and she had come back to her parents and put to bed a baby boy a week earlier. I had come to see her, my kids and her family, and I could name the new child.

"I took a bike, that morning to go see my fellow pastor in the other side of Saminaka to help officiate the ceremony".

According to him, on arriving the Saminaka main bridge, on the Jos-Zaria Expressway, met had a grim encounter.

## Saminaka's green line

The bridge has for long served as a kind of green line between the two major political parties in the country, and the two main religions. Sunday Vanguard learnt that the two group of people had always voted in opposite directions in all elections since 1999. Some said it even dated back before then.

Christians and some Hausa/Fulani occupy the eastern part of the bridge and dominate the Abadawa ward where the Peoples Democratic Party, PDP, has a comfortable base in the town. The western part, called Hayin Gada and populated mostly by Hausa/Fulani and Muslims, but with good presence of other tribes, is a bastion of the All Progressives Congress, APC.



\*Garkida... They stabbed me until I fell

## 'Kill the infidel, cut him down!'

"I reached the bridge on my way to Abadawa when I met some Hausa youths carrying weapons and inflicting injuries on passersby who were not of their own. But since I know some of the boys, I asked them to show mercy on people. To my surprise some of them started yelling, 'Kill him! Kill the infidel! Cut him down!', he said. "One of them rushed at me with a machete. I don't know how I managed to grab him and threw him away. Another came with a sword and aimed at my neck, I used my hand to receive the blow.

"I started running, and one of them used a cutlass and wounded me at the back of my head. I started bleeding and I could feel the blood dripping on my clothes. I kept running, and they kept hitting me with sticks and stabbing me with knives until I fell.

## Saved by a stranger

"As they were coming to finish me off, the last thing I remembered was that a Hausa man, well dressed in white agbada and cap sped on a bike and arrived at my side.

"The man shouted at them in Hausa, 'leave this man alone and disappear now! Are you not satisfied that you have killed him? Every one of you must leave

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immediately I don't know what happened afterwards. I went into coma, the bleeding and pains were too much.

"The man whom I had never met before was said to have stayed there with me, as I later learnt, until my friend, Skido, a Yoruba man, came and evacuated me to an hospital in Saminaka. I was told that I had ruptured intestine.

"The doctor had to bring out my entire intestine and clean up

by stomach before stitching me back. I have been stabbed in many places. You can see the healing wounds. I was brought here to Jengree when my condition got worse. But I am fine now. And I thank God for sparing my life. My sister and mother have been the ones bearing the emotional and financial burden of this problem alone".

## District head's account

The district head of Abadawa, Dahiru Abubakar, himself a Muslim, and a native of Kurama - original inhabitants of Saminaka - wrote a report on the violence to copied Kaduna State government and copied the heads of military and security outfits in Kaduna State, the Emir of Zaria, the state House of Assembly and National Assembly members and others. He blamed the violence on a political party's supporters.

In the report obtained by Sunday Vanguard, dated April 20, 2015 the district head said that on April 13, 2015, he was lying in his palace when around 1pm he was told on phone by someone that "some political thugs" were coming to his palace possibly for trouble.

"Before I could come out, they had reached my palace and immediately started destroying the doors and windows. They were saying, 'we will drink the blood of pagans'. They were saying, 'new assembly, new governor, new district head'. They said that I should come out so that they spill my blood", he wrote.

According to him, they youths left shortly. He wrote that before he could make contact with the police in Saminaka, a fracas had broken out between the invading youths and Abadawa youths.

The district head spoke of seeing more violence as he rode in a car with one of his chiefs in Abadawa despite the arrival of the police. "By the junction of Anguwan Jega (in Abadawa), we met two motorcycles burning. Towards the Roman Catholic Church, we saw a corpse covered with leaves. The police picked the corpse and put it in their vehicle", he wrote.

Abubakar, said they came under attack in another part Abadawa, but they managed to escape.

The attacker later left or were pushed outside Abadawa ward, that afternoon, according to the report. The district head said elders of Abadawa, including him, went from street to street pleading with the youths to calm down, and that the police would

take care of everything.

From his report, he did not cross the main Saminaka bridge on April 13.

Abubakar maintained that Abadawa became calm, and he urged everyone to be vigilant in the night.

He said that on April 14, Abadawa was rife with the rumour that staff of Water Board Corporation, Saminaka, and natives of Abadawa had been murdered by the rampaging youths from the other side.

"This triggered another round of tension as people started looking for ways to revenge. . . Another corpse of an Abadawa man was found by the river side. . . security agents succeeded in chasing people back to their homes. That helped a lot. And later a 24-hour curfew was imposed in the town.

The district head wrote that on April 15, tension was renewed when the corpse of an employee of the Water Board from Abadawa was brought for burial. He praised the Nigerian Army and the police for strictly enforcing the curfew which led to peace. "Shops and other businesses were opened and hungry people caged for three days rushed out to buy food and other needs", according to the report.

## Undergraduate hacked to death

The report listed the names of those from Adabawa killed as follows: Habila Daniel, Danlami Gaba, Michael Timothy Yusuf Usman and Stephen Galadima. Also, one Hausa, Yusuf Usman, was said to have been killed, curiously in the Hausa area of Hayin Gada part of Saminaka.

Joshua Akpama, an Igala from Kogi State and a final year economics student of the Ahmadu Bello University, ABU, Zaria, was also reportedly killed after he was forced out of the vehicle he traveling in.

## Garkida not on list

Meanwhile, the name of Pastor Garkida is not among those injured according to the report.

The district head also listed several damages done to property of many people.

Two suspects were arrested by the police and taken to Kaduna, Abubakar stated in the report.

"The government/authority concerned should ensure that all the perpetrators of such evils are punished according to the rule of law, this will serve as food-for-thought to other youths with same behavior", he advised in the report.