

Nigeria: Kaduna Violence - Killings Continue As Rioters Defy Curfew

By Luka Binniyat With Agency Reports, 21 June 2012



Students of Kaduna State Technical College going home due to the 24 hours curfew imposed on Kaduna on Wednesday.

Kaduna — Heavy fighting, killings and burning of property continued, yesterday, in Hausa/Fulani dominated parts of Kaduna, as the minority non-Muslims in the areas tried to fight back despite the 24-hour curfew imposed over the entire state. This came as Pope Benedict XVI has appealed to those responsible for the violence to stop spilling innocent blood.

As the battle raged, trapped residents who were unable to leave their homes as a result of the 24-hour curfew imposed by the government have cried out saying they were running out of food, medicine and water.

Meanwhile, worried by the spate of killings and destruction, the Chief of Defence Staff, Air Marshal Olusheyin Petinrin and the Acting Inspector General of Police, M D Abubakar held a closed-door meeting with Governor Patrick Yakowa on how to bring normalcy to the state.

The violence was in retaliation to mass killings of Hausa Muslims and the destruction of their property by Christian youths in Kaduna after Islamist militants bombed two churches in Zaria and one in Kaduna last Sunday, killing 17 and injuring several others.

In Bardarawa, north of Kaduna town, fighting raged between Muslims and non-Muslims around 4pm yesterday.

There were reports of killings and burning of homes of mainly non Hausas, but it was also said that youths in some parts of the area, were retaliating.

Meanwhile, casualty continued to rise at the time of this report from findings by Vanguard.

Pope urges end to attacks on Christians in Nigeria

Pope Benedict in his reaction, yesterday, called for immediate end to what he called "terrorist attacks" against Christians in Nigeria and urged all sides to avoid reprisals.

The pope at his weekly general audience said, "I am following with deep concern the news from Nigeria, where terrorist attacks are continuing especially against Christians. I appeal to those responsible for the violence to immediately stop the spilling of the blood of many innocent people."

He urged all groups in Nigeria to shun "the path of vendetta" and work towards building a peaceful society where people were free to practise their religion.

Hospitals receive more corpses, injured persons

At the St. Gerald Catholic Hospital, the Public Relations Officer of the Hospital, Mr Sunday John confirmed to Vanguard that five corpses were deposited, yesterday, with 14 injured persons, as a result of the fresh violence.

At the Barau Dikko General Hospital, an unspecified number of dead bodies were taken there with many other injured persons.

It was also gathered that some other private hospitals were treating many injured victims.

Another source told Vanguard, that a car conveying four traders to their business premises on Jos Road, off Bayajida Street, was burnt with all the occupants of the car, inside, Tuesday.

"Their bodies are still inside the burnt car", said the source who asked not to be mentioned.

In Barnawa part of the town, it was reported that some trucks and buses were brought to evacuate many women and children since the violence broke out last Sunday.

A source at Barnawa, told Vanguard in his home, that some arms and ammunition were recovered in a mosque along Unguwan Barde, on Aliyu Makama Road.

"When the youths stormed the Holy Family Catholic Church last Tuesday evening, we knew that they would not have the guts if they did not have something to fall back to. We organised ourselves and chased them with sticks and stones. Soon the loudspeaker in the mosque started calling for prayers at that odd time. The man calling for the prayers even said that they should come ready to fight. It was at this point that we informed the soldiers and they came into the mosque and arrested three persons with arms and ammunition", he said.

"We have been told reliably that they have brought in their fighters. We have not slept since last Monday evening, keeping watch over them", he added.

At far away Kawo, it was reported that youths were said to have hijacked vehicles, killing travelers.

At Hiyin Banki, many were reported killed, while Christian youths had also responded by killing and burning some Hausa Muslims and their property.

Curiously however, the areas south of Kaduna River were calm yesterday.

But a source, told Vanguard that some of the youths had sneaked out to join in the fight North of the river.

Major streets in Kaduna were deserted, shops and offices were shut while schools and business areas were closed.

40 persons killed in Damaturu

Also in Damaturu, Yobe state capital where a 24-hour curfew has also been imposed, 34 civilians, four policemen and two soldiers were said to have been killed according to the state police commissioner, Mr Patrick Egbuniwe.

The city was deserted Wednesday after the government imposed a 24-hour curfew that left residents trapped wherever they were when violence erupted.

After being trapped for two days, residents said they were running out of food, medicine and water.

Abdul Malik, a 41-year-old father of two, said his family has stopped taking baths so they can have more water to drink.

"We should be giving the children antibiotics but we are just boiling the water, especially for the baby," he said.

Malik said he felt fortunate, however, that he had already returned home when the first blasts went off.

Isa Ahmed Dori, 39, said he was separated from his wife and child because he had gone to visit a friend. He has since learnt that his father-in-law died in the violence.

"I am in a dilemma," he said on the phone. "I don't know how my family is faring."

An auto mechanic in the restive city said he has not been home since the fighting started.

"I have been in my workshop since Monday," Gambo Bakanike told AFP. "We have an open well from which we can get our drinking water, but we have run out of food."

A senior hospital official said he and his staff have also been stranded since Monday.

"There is water but we don't have any food. Our families can't bring us anything because of the curfew," said the official who asked to remain anonymous.

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