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Gamji 13 by Christian M. E. Aluko

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BBC

Friday, 22 November, 2002, 12:35 GMT

Miss World riots 'leave 100 dead'

Clashes two years ago led to Kaduna being segregated

At least 100 people are now known to have died in riots in the northern Nigerian city of Kaduna over the Miss World beauty contest, according to Red Cross officials.

A heavy security presence has been imposed after protests started by Muslim youths which also left hundreds injured.

Nigeria: Hosting Miss World after Miss Nigeria won last year's contest

They began after a newspaper suggested that the Prophet Mohammed would have probably chosen to marry one of the Miss World contestants if he had witnessed the beauty pageant - which Nigeria is hosting.

The contest's organisers said on Friday they intend to go ahead with the event despite the protests.

Further sporadic clashes were reported on Friday despite the deployment of the hundreds of police and soldiers and the imposition of a curfew.

On Thursday, thousands of Muslim youths rampaged through the suburbs of the city, putting up barricades of burning tyres, setting fire to buildings, and attacking churches.

According to the Associated Press news agency, thousands of people have sought refuge in army bases and police stations.

Kaduna is one of Nigeria's most volatile cities; more than 2,000 people died there in clashes between Christians and Muslims two years ago.

Muslim groups complain that the contest is immoral and degrading to women, and are also angry that preliminary events began during the holy month of Ramadan.

About 90 contestants are in Nigeria for the Miss World events, which are only taking place in southern areas which are largely Christian.

Text message

On Friday, mobs of minority Christian youths were reported to be retaliating against Muslims, and an overnight curfew was extended.

Red Cross spokesman George Bennett told the BBC that medical teams were working to give first aid to the injured, and that scores of bodies had been identified amid the debris.

Four hospitals in the city were coping with hundreds of casualties from the rioting that spread through many districts.

Armed security men have been posted all over the city, stopping and searching people.

A death sentence imposed on an unmarried mother prompted a boycott

The trouble in Kaduna escalated on Thursday after an attack the previous day by hundreds of people chanting "Allahu Akbar" (God is great) on the office of ThisDay newspaper, which printed the offending article.

Schools and shops hurriedly closed as crowds of young men ignited makeshift street barricades, sending up plumes of black smoke.

Four churches were said to have been destroyed, shops looted and cars overturned and burned.

Local mosques had been calling for action against the paper and some people were alerted to the article by text messages sent to their mobile phones, correspondents say.

Religious leaders are meeting representatives of the state and federal governments in Kaduna to discuss ways of lowering the tension, a spokesman told the French news agency AFP.

Amid fears that the unrest could spread, security forces were expected to be on heightened alert for during Friday prayers in Kano, the north's biggest city, Reuters news agency said.

Dogged by controversy

The Nigerian government has appealed for calm and has assured Muslims that those responsible for the article, which appeared in ThisDay newspaper, would be brought to book, for exceeding "the bounds of responsible journalism."

ThisDay has retracted the offending article and has published apologies.

The chairman of the group that owns the Lagos-based paper suggested that a computer glitch could have been to blame for the fact that the story went to press in the first place.

The holding of the Miss World contest in Nigeria has also provoked international controversy.

It had been threatened by a boycott by beauty queens after a woman convicted of adultery, Amina Lawal, was sentenced to death by a Sharia court.

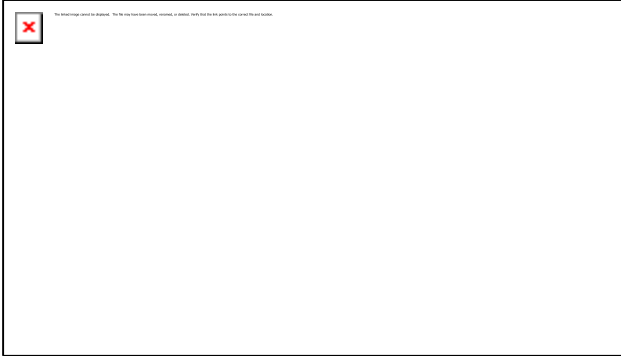
The Nigerian Government moved to calm fears by promising it would not allow any Nigerian to be stoned to death.

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BBC

Tuesday, 12 November, 2002, 15:07 GMT

Stoning row hits Nigeria's publicity drive



The beauty queens are there to enjoy themselves

Dan Isaacs
BBC, Abuja




More than 80 contestants have arrived in the Nigerian capital, Abuja, reassured by the federal government's promise that they will intervene if necessary to save the life of a Muslim woman sentenced to death by stoning for adultery.

The ugly controversy has dogged this year's Miss World beauty contest with some beauty queens deciding to boycott the event to be held on 7 December.

At Abuja airport they were welcomed to a huge crowd of chaos and pandemonium of music, of drums in the background - a big festive occasion.

Most of the contestants who have arrived, like Miss England Daniella Luan, are determined to take part in this contest.

They are here to enjoy themselves and take part in what for them is a once in a lifetime experience.

 There's no record of anybody who has ever been stoned to death in this country

Dubem Onyia
Nigerian Minister

Media spotlight


Daniella Luan said: "Well, I've just been assured that it [stoning sentence] has been resolved and it's not going ahead... the Nigerian Government has overruled it".

She said that she did not consider boycotting the event.

The Nigerian Government is desperate to play down the controversy surrounding the convicted woman Amina Lawal, who has a child outside wedlock.

This is, after all, an international media event which has the potential to portray the country in a much-needed positive light.

Spokesman for the government on this occasion is the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Dubem Onyia, and he has assured everyone that ultimately the federal government will intervene to overturn the stoning conviction of Amina Lawal.

 Government says Amina will not be killed

"The federal law takes precedence over the individual or collective Muslim law," Mr Onyia said, stating that Muslim punishments like stoning to death "will never be carried out".

But these laws still exist in Nigeria. What is the federal government going to do to change the laws if that is what they choose, or want to do?

Mr Onyia insisted: the "supreme document in this country is the constitution and once the appeal is made, it will be sustained and the judgement will be thrown away, because there's no record of anybody who has ever been stoned to death in this country".

'Sex hazard'

But that argument does not convince the lawyers defending Amina.

And hers is not the only case. At least three other stoning convictions under Sharia law are currently awaiting appeal.

Hauwa Ibrahim a lawyer acting for Amina Lawal told the BBC:

"As far as we are concerned, we want to stick to our cases and to ensure that Amina's life is not taken away without due process and the rule of law applied in her case".

And if the controversy surrounding Amina Lawal were not enough of a headache for the Miss World promoters, the country's devout Muslims are also angry that the contest is taking place here.

Huseyn Zakaria is an Islamic preacher in Abuja. He says all Muslims in Nigeria are against this beauty pageant.

"They are against the beauty pageant because it's all about commercial sex trading, it's about nudity, it's about immorality. "It's about exposing the youngsters of the community to a sex hazard," he says.

And yet this beauty pageant will be keenly watched by millions on television here who welcome the idea of such a glamorous event being staged in Nigeria.

Rights and wrongs

But the arrival of the Miss World contestants has at least provoked a debate over the Sharia issue among ordinary Nigerians.

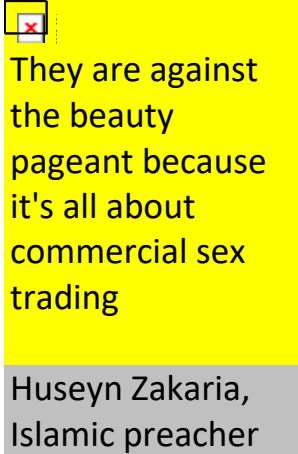
One woman said: "Yeah, I think it's a shame because I mean in the 20th or 21st century, stoning somebody, a human being to death. I think it's a bad thing".

A male bystander added: "If anyone makes a decision they're not coming to Nigeria because of Sharia, it's just unfortunate for Nigeria. But I feel bad, I feel bad on my pride here because I'm looking forward to the event".

So the stage is set for both a beauty pageant and a major political controversy here, with the rights and wrongs of Islamic justice firmly in the spotlight.


The life of a woman, Amina Lawal, and others who find themselves also facing the sentence of death by stoning is hanging very much in the balance.

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They are against the beauty pageant because it's all about commercial sex trading

Huseyn Zakaria, Islamic preacher



Miss England did not consider boycotting the event

Tuesday, 12 November, 2002, 19:51 GMT
Plea to stop Nigeria pageant boycott

Ms Lawal's case has caused international outrage

A Nigerian Muslim woman under sentence of death by stoning has asked participants not to boycott the Miss World contest to be held on 7 December. The pageant has been threatened by a large-scale boycott by beauty queens protesting the punishment against Amina Lawal for bearing a child outside wedlock.

I heard of the boycott threat, but I just think they should come because nothing happens without God's permission

Amina Lawal

But speaking as some 80 contestants arrived in the Nigerian capital, Abuja, Ms Lawal said a lot of resources had gone into organising the pageant and it should go ahead.

The Nigerian Government, desperate to play down the controversy surrounding Ms Lawal's sentence, has given assurances that it would intervene to save her once the legal process has been exhausted.

No pressure

However, Ms Lawal says she has not been contacted by government officials.

Beauty queens have been split over the pageant

She said she has not been pressurised into speaking against the boycott.

She told reporters: "I heard of the boycott threat, but I just think they should come because nothing happens without God's permission".

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GUARDIAN NOV 22, 2002

Kaduna imposes 24-hour curfew, as violence continues

Saxone Akhaine, Kaduna, Adamu Abuh, Kano, Charles Coffie-Gyamfi, Abeokuta

A 24-hour curfew was yesterday imposed on Kaduna State following violence by Moslems who are protesting the hosting of *Miss World* beauty contest in Nigeria and the alleged blasphemy of Prophet Mohammed by a national newspaper (not *The Guardian*).

At least, 15 people were reportedly killed in the pandemonium which led to the setting ablaze of four churches and destruction of property worth billions of naira.

The crisis, which began around 8 a.m., saw hundreds of Moslems embarking on public demonstrations in the metropolis, as they made bonfires in strategic places like Tudun Wada, Rigasa, Hayanbanki, Kabala Kostain, Kano Road, Jos Road. Motorists were forced to carry fresh leaves on their vehicles while those who refused to adhere to the instructions of the demonstrators had their vehicles smashed.

The violent protest later took a political dimension as the mob increased in large numbers singing anti-Makarfi slogan.

Several bill-boards of the state Governor, Alhaji Ahmed Mohammed Makarfi's campaign for 2003 election were destroyed by the protesters. Moslems, who carried their protest to the Government House along 44, Barrack Road, also made bonfires at the entrance of the premises while all posters carrying Makarfi's campaign photographs in the area were defaced. The state Police Command had to beef up security at the premises the Governor's residence while several armed policemen detailed to the area shot tear gas canisters to disperse the rioters.

The situation in Kaduna town was particularly tense as civil servants, market women, schools, closed for business as early as 10 a.m while transporters withdrew their vehicles from the roads, leaving thousands of commuters trekking several kilometres to their homes.

Around 12 p.m., many shops and private houses in Tudun Wada were torched.

The Young Men Christian Association (YMCA) Building, the Catholic Church in Tudun Wada, St. Davids Catholic Church Rigasa, Saint Augustine

Church, Tudun Wada were also set ablaze. Two people were also said to have died.

While the Rapid Respond Squad of the Nigerian Army rolled out their armour tanks, the violence heightened in Badarawa where a policeman was also killed.

However, two youths that gave an account of the incident in Rigasa told journalists: "We decided to continue the protest because two of our members have been shot dead."

A house adjacent to the National Electric Power Authority (NEPA) office at Abakpa area was torched while about three cars were completely burnt to ashes.

Among those who were counting their losses in yesterday's violence were the proprietors of Tati Hotel, Warri Street; Talk-of-the-Town Hotel, Calabar Street; Central Hotel, Jos Road and Niger Hotel, Katsina Road who had their buildings razed by fire.

Makarfi in a special announcement said: "Government of Kaduna State has noted with a great sense of concern, the resort to violence and other forms of lawlessness as a result of a publication by a national newspaper over the weekend which a very large segment of the Nigerian people find offensive and even repulsive."

To curb the ongoing violence, Makarfi pointed out that "the state government has decided to impose a 24-hour curfew in Kaduna and environs with immediate effect.

"People are therefore advised in their own interest, to please go home immediately and remain law-abiding as government gets on top of the situation. Security agents have been given clear instructions to decisively deal with looters, arsonists and other perpetrators of carnage, as these cannot be justified in any way."

Makarfi noted that the government particularly shared the feelings of the Moslem community in the state over the publication, saying: "the said publication was most reckless and irresponsible as it clearly assaults the sensibilities and values of Moslems wherever they are."

He then assured: "Our leaders, religious and political, at all levels are doing everything possible to ensure that perpetrators of this assault on a peoples' values are not allowed to get away with it.

"The destruction and looting going on in some parts of Kaduna is nowhere near what Islam enjoins; and it is not something that the government would fold its arms and allow to go on. It is therefore doing everything possible to ensure that the situation remains under control."

In his own address, the chairman, Rapid Response Committee of the Jamatu Nasnil Islam (JNI), Malam Zubair Jibril Maigwari II, declared: "We condemn the misguided provocation and the dangerous publication currently threatening the peace of the country."

Maigwari II, who is also the Emir of Birnin Gwari argued: "The stand of Moslems on the unfortunate ongoing show of shame called the beauty contest is simple. We abhor it on religious grounds and we believe that based on morality, it is not sanctioned by other religions and on this we owe nobody any apology."

The Emir stated conditions for the Federal Government and they are as follow:

- the immediate closure of the newspaper for its subversive activity against the peace and security of the nation;
- the arrest of the executive of the newspaper and the writer of the article and the immediate prosecution for treasonable felony;
- the immediate suspension of the show now going on in the country, especially the grand finale fixed for Abuja; and
- the Federal Government should retrieve all money's spent on the beauty contest from public funds.

Maigwari further argued that a failure by the government to take this action will clearly signal to the Moslems of this country and the world at large that the *Miss World* contest was planned in Nigeria to insult Moslems and Islam. He called on the Moslem community "to henceforth boycott the newspapers for it is an instrument of Satan and we further call on all Moslems to remain calm and law-abiding in the face of this provocation and attack."

Meanwhile, the leader of Northern Youths and President of Civil Rights Congress (CRC), Malam Shehu Sani, who spoke in an interview with *The Guardian* on phone condemned the action of the state government for allowing the violence in Kaduna to escalate.

According to him, the repeat of this disturbance further showed that "Makarfi cannot manage crisis situation effectively."

"Personally, I counted several corpses on he roads yesterday when the situation died down. And this ought not to be if the government had reacted immediately. There was signal of this crisis in town."

Sani further stressed that "the governor and other aspirants have not actually shown adequate commitment during situations of crisis," adding that "Civil rights activists, such as I am have gone out to show concern, even during situation of crisis, to the people."

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GUARDIAN 22 NOV 2002

Govt, Sultan, others appeal for calm over offensive publication

AMIDST violent protests in Kaduna over last Saturday's publication by a national newspaper, the Federal Government, the Sultan of Sokoto and religious leaders nationwide have appealed to offended Moslems nationwide to remain calm as steps are being taken to appropriately sanction those behind the publication.

Moslems were also reminded that the Ramadan period "is to be observed with peace and dedication to God."

In a statement signed by the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), Chief Ufot Ekaette, last night in Abuja, the Federal Government assures "all Nigerians, especially Moslems that necessary steps are being taken to bring to book through due process, those associated with *Thisday's* publication of November 16, 2002 which, without doubt, exceeded the bounds of responsible journalism by making provocative publication on the Holy Prophet".

Ekaette said the government "will not condone such deliberate provocation and offending of the sensibilities of followers of any faith."

He added that: "necessary steps, as provided by law, have been taken to bring those responsible to book."

Ekaette added: "The government is appealing to Moslems not to take the law into their hands over the matter as their complaints are being redressed. People should accordingly go about their lawful duties without fear of molestation."

Reminding the Moslems about the essence of the season, the SGF noted: "We should remember that this is the holy month of Ramadan when all are expected to behave soberly and with restraint."

He also noted that "security agents have been directed to deal decisively with those who might want to exploit the present misunderstanding to foment disorder."

Also speaking yesterday, the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Muhammadu Maccido, the Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs (SCIA) and the Jamatu Nasir Islam, appealed to the protester to stop the violence assuring them that the "issue of blasphemy would be looked onto by the SCIA."

The Sultan reminded Moslems: "We are now in the sacred month of Ramadan, which is to be observed with peace and dedication to worship."

He quoted verse 216 of Suratu *Baqarat* of the Holy Koran, which says: "They ask you about fighting in the sacred month, say therein that it is a great transgression."

Also speaking, the Secretary-General of the NSCIA, Dr. Lateef Adegbite, has appealed to Moslems to accept the apology of *This Day* over the publication.

Similarly, Moslem clerics under the aegis of the Supreme Council for Moslems (SCM) rose from a meeting in Kano yesterday with a call on the faithfuls to exercise restraint and embrace peace in the interest of Nigeria's stability.

While accepting that the publication was abusive and a slap on Moslems, the *Ulamas* stated that any resort to violence would be counter-productive.

Reports from Katsina, Bauchi and Kano say the three cities are calm without any sign of violence. Sources in Bauchi dismissed the fear that the Kaduna bloody clash may have spread to the town, while sources contacted in Katsina and Kano said there was no cause for alarm because no Moslem will engage in violence during the holy month of "Ramadan."

Adegbite, who spoke with *The Guardian* in Abeokuta, Ogun State yesterday, noted that since the *This Day* had tendered an unreserved apology and pleaded for forgiveness, the issue should be laid to rest.

His words: "Since they have apologised and the tone showed remorse and repentance, I will plead that their apology should be accepted and they should be forgiven."

"In the spirit of Ramadan, they should be forgiven," he urged.

The SCIA scribe appealed to the protesting youths "not to indulge in such again."

Prior to the protest on Wednesday, Adegbite had in a five-paragraph letter to the Editor of *This Day* requested the management to tender an apology and retract the article or face legal action.

He had stated in the letter that "we were greatly shocked that you readily provided the platform for such a dastardly statement either deliberately or recklessly without caring for the effect such tantrum would have on the psyche of Moslems."

To ensure that the protest against the offensive publication does not escalate, the clerics pleaded with their members to consider Nigeria's stability in their approach to the issue.

The SCM's Vice-President, Sheikh Karibullah Nasiru Kabara, who spoke with journalists in Kano also enjoined the Federal Government to take punitive action against *This Day* to douse tension in Moslem dominated-states.

He described those behind the publication as "pen terrorists" keen on creating tension, riot and public disturbances capable of disrupting the forthcoming elections and the country's democracy.

Enjoining Moslems, especially in the ancient city of Kano to avoid acts that could disrupt the peace, Kabara said all hands must be on deck to ensure peaceful co-existence in Nigeria.

He remarked that: "This type of article emanated from a mercenaries hired to destabilize Nigeria, through civil and communal unrest, for the benefit of their hirers, the people who have failed or fear that they will fail to achieve their political goals."

"I would like the Nigerian public to note that whoever hired this paper and the author of article, bought their conscience and paid them for publishing such slanderous article in order to stir emotion and create disturbances will fail and the Nigerian security will find them and deal with them."

Apparently reacting to the protests in Kaduna, the cleric, flanked by Prof. Isa Hashim and dozens of other *Ulamas*, said: "It depends on the action of the government. There is need for a punitive action on the writer, publication and publisher before you can be guaranteed of peaceful conduct by all Moslems who are aggrieved."

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Miss World contestants relive experience, say Nigeria is safe

From Anietie Akpan, Calabar GUARDIAN 22 NOV 2002

FOREIGN media reports which declared Nigeria as unsafe for the *Miss World* pageant received harsh words from the contestants yesterday who described the publication as misleading and in bad faith.

In separate messages to their countries and parents, the contestants urged them not to panic because Nigeria is safe for both citizens and foreigners. They also gave a pass-mark to the security arrangement put in place by the Federal Government and organisers of the event.

The beauty queens were reacting to reports urging their countries and parents to recall them as a result of threat to their lives and insecurity in the country.

To buttress their claims, the foreign media claimed that plans had been completed to amputate 12 children in the Northern part of the country, and therefore urged the affected countries to recall their citizens already in Nigeria to protest the action.

But the contestants told *The Guardian* yesterday that during discussions with their parents, they discovered that some of them and their countries were not aware of the reports.

According to the beauty queens, "Nigeria is safe for us and we cannot abandon the *Miss World* contest midway".

Though some parents acting on the reports had advised their wards to come back home, at the Metropolitan Hotel, Calabar where the 94 beauty queens

are lodged, those who spoke to *The Guardian* said that their parents' fears were unnecessary. The environment at the hotel was calm and normal while the girls were in high spirit during the interaction.

A few of them said that their home countries were not aware of the reports while others confirmed that they were asked to return home.

Among those who bared their minds were Miss Colombia, Natalia Peralta Castro; Miss Curacao, Ayanette Statia; Miss Chile, Daniela Casanova Muller; Miss Latvia, Baiba Svarca and Miss Kenya, Marianne Kariuki.

They asserted that the country was safe for them and described the reports as mere speculations.

Said Miss Castro: "I enjoy a lot to be here. The people have been friendly and I do like in future to come back to Nigeria. I would like to tell my people to visit Nigeria."

Speaking through her chaperon Geman Bernard, the Colombia representative said her people had not read of such news item on children billed for amputation.

"I spoke to some people in my country, nobody said anything about it," she added.

The 22-year-old fourth year Dental student from the city of Medellin was optimistic of emerging as the winner of the pageant.

Twenty-three-year-old Muller, who is representing Chile, said before now, she thought Nigeria was a dangerous country especially with the stories about Lagos but "it is a beautiful country with good environment, lots of children and friendly people.

"I will encourage people in my country to come to Nigeria and do business because the country is safe," she remarked.

On the alleged amputation plot, she said nobody had heard anything about it in her country.

"I won't abandon the contest and go home. In fact, I will love to come back to Nigeria", she stated.

Suarce from Lativa stated that she does not believe in such rumour on amputation. "I am happy to participate in the event. Cross River is a beautiful place.

"It is my first time in Africa. The climate is very warm and I will love to come back", she assured.

Ayanette Statia of Curacao who arrived Calabar early this week, said "I heard of it (the amputation story) but I don't believe in that. If it was true the local papers would have reported."

She explained that her late arrival was due to drug reaction as she was ill on first day of departure hence Airport officials turned her back.

"I was sick and I took pills. The flight officials could not carry me under such condition. I was turned back from Aruba but later I changed my pills and I was okay," she explained.

Stalia denied allegations that she did not want to come to Nigeria because of the death sentence on Amina Lawal, saying, "that is a rumour, I really wanted to come. For us, it is the other side of the world."

The beauty queen whose country has same weather with Nigeria had a feel of "chicken pepper" soup even though she complained that the pepper was too much.

Two things she said have made her stay in Calabar memorable is the children and the green lush vegetation."

"The children feel good and they are so sweet and innocent. The environment here is fresh and no contamination; everything here is green, no pollution," she stated.

For 19-year-old Kenyan contestant, Marianne Kariuki, the story is the same. The tall chocolate beauty with radiant smiles said she has got all it takes to emerge as the next *Miss World*.

"Like any other girl, I have equal chance. I have got all it takes and takes one to be charming, charismatic and to be very ambitious to be a beauty queen," she declared.

She wants to turn her focus on Africa and charity shows, liasing with different international organisations if she emerged the winner of the pageant.

The young Kenyan said even though she had just spent a week in Nigeria, "I believe Nigerians are fine people and I think I will come back."

On the amputation story, she admitted hearing of it but not from his country and "I think it is not true because I have not read it in the local papers.

She described the Kwa Falls in Cross River State as breath-taking while the Mary Slessor House at Okoyong is commendable and wonderful.

The beauty queens departed the Margaret Slessor International Airport yesterday afternoon for Abuja to pick some of their personal effects before going to Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

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**Moslems protest *Miss World*contest, torch *Thisday* office GUARDIAN
NOVE 21, 2002**

- Newspaper's management apologises

From Saxone Akhaine, Kaduna

PERSONS suspected to be Moslem youths trooped to the streets of Kaduna yesterday, to protest Nigeria's hosting of the *Miss World* pegeant.

The protesters chanting *Allah Akbar* (Allah is the greatest) also passed a *Fatwa* (death sentence) on the publisher of *ThisDay*, Mr. Nduka Obaigbena and the Editor, Mr. Eniola Bello for alleged blasphemy of Prophet Mohammed in a recent publication.

However, the newspaper's management swiftly apologised to all Moslems, and asked for forgiveness in the spirit of Islam and Ramadan, for what it called a production error.

Similarly, the Council of Imams and Ulama, Kaduna State chapter has asked the Federal Government in the interest of peace in the country to cancel the beauty contest slated for next month.

In a statement by its chairman, Sheikh Abubakar Abdulkareem, the council remarked: "Ordinarily, the decision to host a beauty contest in an environment with a considerable Moslem population would insult the religion, moral sensibility of a typical Moslem, and of course, he/she would voice against it. That has been the case since the stage-managed victory of Nigeria's Agbani Darego at the last beauty contest which automatically gave Nigeria the hosting right of the next contest."

It alleged that the Moslems' opposition would have ended up influencing the timing, popularity and the process of conducting the beauty contest.

"But with a blasphemous article that appeared in one of the recent publications of *ThisDay*, the government needs to cancel the contest for the sake of corporate survival. Let it be unequivocally stated here that Prophet Mohammed forms the chunk of passion of a conscious Moslem that any insult on the Prophet's personality unleashes the rage in the Moslem. That is why a portion of the satanic article in *ThisDay* of November 16, 2002 has dared the guts of the Moslems," the statement added.

Tension rose in Kaduna metropolis yesterday as residents woke up to see the youths marching on major streets, burning copies of *ThisDay* on the newsstands.

They attributed their action to a publication in *ThisDay* on Saturday, last week where it denigrated and blasphemed Prophet Mohammed and made mockery of Islam.

The youths headed for the newspaper's office in the town and razed it. They also seized all the copies of November 20, 2002 edition of the paper at its Circulation Annex office on Ahmadu Bello way and burnt them.

As early as 6 a.m., the youths armed with daggers, machetes, clubs and gallons of a substance suspected to be petrol, took to the streets, chanting anti -Miss World slogans.

There was pandemonium as the protesting youths chased vendors and readers away from newsstands.

Commuters and motorists also ran for safety.

The youths, in three buses had stormed the *ThisDay* zonal office on Attahiru Road, where they destroyed property worth millions of naira before torching the building. They marched through major streets like Independence Road, Ahmadu Bello Way, Katsina Road and Junction Road.

Armed policemen dispersed the irate youths who later converge at Tudun Wada for a peaceful rally.

Moslem leaders, who addressed them passed death sentence on Obaigbena and Bello for the alleged blasphemous publication

They also declared the organisation as an enemy of Islam. Narrating their ordeal to journalists, the security guard at the newspaper's premises said:

"The people that came to our building were over 50 in number and they came in three buses, with the inscription of an Islamic organisation.

"They were shouting *Allah Akbar*. We were about removing the signboard when they came down from the buses. We then took to our heels and they began to set the place ablaze".

Although officers and men of the fire service later came to the scene, they, however, complained that they had not water.

An Islamic leader, Dr. Mohammed Mahdi who came to the scene of the inferno, praised those who carried out the operation, saying that "the Moslems in the country have been pushed to the wall and it is high time we reacted vehemently and swiftly".

He disclosed that the Moslem *Umma* had given the Federal Government a seven day ultimatum to call the publisher and the editor to order to prevent the death sentence passed on them from being executed.

Supreme Council for Sharia in Nigeria (SCSN) President, Dr. Ibrahim Datti, who reacted to the publication said that the newspaper had declared war against Islam and Moslems should, therefore, wage same against it.

The Deputy Commissioner of Police, Mr. Edger Nanakumo who spoken to the protest, assured residents that "there was no cause for alarm."

However, the management of *Thisday*, apology last night, asked for forgiveness in the spirit of Islam and Ramadan.

The statement titled "An Apology to All Muslims" read in part: "To all our Muslim brothers and sisters, Assalamu Alaikum Wa Rahamatul-Llahi Wa Barakatuhu. May the peace and blessing of Allah be upon you all.

"With all sense of responsibility, sensitivity and respect for all Muslims, the staff, management, editors and Board of *Thisday* newspapers apologise for the great editorial error in last Saturday's editor on Miss World Beauty Pageant.

"We are sorry that the portrayal of the Holy Prophet Mohammed in a commentary written by one of our staff was not only unjustified, but utterly provocative.

"The supervising editor made an attempt to remove the offensive portion during the editing process. But we must say that this time, technology failed us, and gravely too.

"At Thisday we have no reason to denigrate Muslims or the Holy Prophet. Why should we? Key members of our management are devoted Muslims, including our group executive director, Alhaji Deji Mustapha, who also runs the Friday page on Islam; our deputy editor, Alhaji Yusuph Olaniyonu; our Editor at large, Waziri Adio; our development editor, Bolaji Abdullahi, our Associate Editor, Ali M. Ali and our Associate Director, Alhaji Nuhu Musa Kazaure among others.

"Why would we do anything that would seem to denigrate any religion, when we believe in the peaceful co-existence of Nigeria?

"Islam teaches that no human being is infallible.

"We, therefore, seek the understanding of our Muslim brothers and sisters and sincerely hope that in the spirit of the Holy month of Ramadan, and in the interest of our beloved country, Nigeria, we would show forgiveness and understanding.

"May the Almighty Allah, the God of infinite wisdom, continue to guide us aright. Ma-Assalam and Ramadan Kareem."

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BBC Thursday, 21 November, 2002, 21:23 GMT

Twelve killed in Miss World riots

Clashes two years ago led to Kaduna being segregated

At least 12 people have been killed in the Nigerian city of Kaduna after protests against next month's Miss World beauty competition descended into bloody violence.

Business is paralysed, everybody is staying at home

Shehu Sani, civil rights activist

Many more are also believed to have died, after thousands of Muslim youths rampaged through the suburbs of the city, erecting barricades of burning tyres, setting fire to buildings, and attacking churches.

The authorities in the northern city have declared a curfew with immediate effect.

Protests started after the newspaper ThisDay published an article which said that the Prophet Mohammed would probably have chosen to marry one of the contestants if he had witnessed the beauty pageant, which Nigeria is hosting next month.

Kaduna is one of Nigeria's most volatile cities, and has been largely segregated into Christian and Muslim areas since clashes two years ago, in which more than 2,000 people died.

Text message

On Wednesday hundreds of people chanting "Allahu Akbar" (God is great) attacked the Kaduna office of the Lagos-based newspaper, which has retracted the article and published two separate apologies.

Civil rights activist Shehu Sani told the French news agency, AFP that the city had descended into "pandemonium" on Thursday, with the streets littered with burning tyres.

"Schools and public offices are shut. Business is paralysed, everybody is staying at home and the security forces are trying to avoid contact with the demonstrators," he said.

The BBC's Yusuf Sarki Muhammad says that local mosques had been calling for action against the paper and said that some people were first alerted to the article by text messages being sent to their mobile phones.

Death by stoning

The government has issued a statement, appealing for calm and assuring Muslims that those responsible for the ThisDay article would be brought to book, for exceeding "the bounds of responsible journalism."

Witnesses told Reuters news agency that the rioters have vowed to attack ThisDay offices all over the north, where Sharia law has been introduced.

Nigeria is hosting the Miss World contests after Miss Nigeria won last year

The Miss World pageant is taking place over several weeks in Nigeria, but only in the southern, largely Christian and Animist, part of the country.

Muslim groups say the contest is un-Islamic and are also upset that it began during the holy month of Ramadan.

The contest had also been threatened by a large-scale boycott by beauty queens protesting against a Sharia court's sentence of death by stoning against Amina Lawal, a woman convicted of adultery.

The Nigerian Government has moved to calm fears by promising it will not allow any Nigerian to be stoned to death and about 90 Miss World contestants have arrived in Nigeria, ahead of the final contest in the capital, Abuja, on 7 December.

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THIS DAY NOVEMBER 25, 2002

[As Violence Spreads to Owerri, Aba...](#)

How Nigeria Was Denied Miss World, By Gana

Aso Rock, Ibori pray for peace, stability

From Chuks Odittah in Owerri and Wale Olaleye in Lagos with agency reports

The religious cum ethnic crisis which broke out as a result of Nigeria's hosting of the Miss World Beauty Pageant at the weekend assu-med a worse dimension as it spreads to three cities in the South-east zone, Aba, Owerri and Okigwe.

But the Minister of Information and National Orientation, Professor Jerry Gana ascribed Nigeria's loss of the hosting rights of the Miss World Beauty Pageant to conspiracy by the international press led by the British press.

However, President Olusegun Obasanjo yesterday led a special prayer for the nation, as he asked God to ensure peace and tranquility in the nation from now on.

Gana who felt disappointed by the relocation of the grand finale of the pageant to

London from Abuja where the beauty queens had already assembled said the scheme by the international press to deny an African country of hosting the competition was aided by the local press.

"There's an international conspiracy just to show that an African country like Nigeria cannot host this thing. I think Nigerians should be really angry with the international press," he said.

He continued: "I salute the courage of the contestants. They came all the way here despite the conspiracy of the international press... particularly the British press," he said.

Gana also criticised THISDAY for its publication which was used by the opposition to the hosting of the beauty pageant in staging violent protests.

The violent protests which claimed several lives in Kaduna where it began last Wednesday however took a more dangerous dimension as reprisal attacks in three South-east towns, forced some Northerners resident in Owerri, Okigwe and Aba to scamper into safety in military barracks.

In Aba, protesters who believed that some religious fundamentalists had hidden under the cover of the anti-Miss World protests to execute ethnic agenda by attacking Igbo-Christian traders resident in Kaduna and destroying their businesses decided to retaliate on Hausa traders in the commercial town.

The protesters then stormed the Central Mosque and injured at least 10 people. They also destroyed goods and property on adjoining streets.

The affected places were Ame Hausa, Hospital Road, Jubilee Road, Azikiwe Road, Clifford Junction, and St. Michael's Road Junctions.

A detachment of mobile policemen had, however, cordoned off the affected areas as at the time of going to press.

Leader of the Hausa community in Aba, Alhaji Tanko Bello said the protesters destroyed food items, wares and razed all stalls located near the central mosque.

He said that fear of further attacks forced the non-indigenes to flee to the Police Area Commander's office for safety.

"The people came in early in the morning and started destroying our food, clothing and property. They also destroyed louvres," Bello said.

Contacted, the Area Commander in Aba merely said: "You can go and get your information anywhere. I will not speak to any journalist."

While addressing members of the Hausa community on Sunday, Senator Adolphus Wabara, representing Abia South Senatorial District part of whose constituency Aba falls, urged residents to remain calm, as the police would fish out the perpetrators of the violence.

"I want you to remain assured that the government would help in reducing your travail as I am going to Abuja to tell the Senate and my colleagues about what has happened and with 40 or 50 of my senators putting pressure on the government, they will surely bring succour to everyone," he said.

The senator also told Muslims in the commercial city that what happened was not a reflection of the true attitude of the Igbo, who he said are very accommodating.

"This incident is regrettable and will stand condemned," he said.

Efforts to speak with the Police Commissioner in Umuahia, proved futile as the telephone in his office rang without a reply.

And in Owerri and Okigwe, most Northerners resident in the towns were forced to flee their homes and abandoned their property to take refuge at the Artillery Brigade Army Barrack, Obinze following early morning outbreak of fighting between some Igbo youths and members of the Hausa community.

Eye-witness account told THISDAY in Owerri that the skirmish began yesterday morning when news of the protest by muslim fundamentalists in Kaduna and Abuja reached the Hausa community in Owerri that fresh fighting may have begun yesterday in Aba, Abia State, following protest against the cancelled beauty pageant.

The eye-witness who pleaded anonymity told THISDAY that hundreds of Hausa people who fled their residents encountered pockets of Igbo youths who engaged them in retaliatory duel, following the killing of their own kinsmen in Kaduna at the weekend.

Although, the state Commissioner of Police, Mr Beneth Oghomone could not be

reached at press time for comments, a detachment of mobile policemen, consisting of about fifty were seen stationed at the Ama-Awusa area of Douglass Street, to forestall any major outbreak of violence.

Eye-witnesses however confirmed that no lives were lost on both sides.

President Obasanjo who personally led the prayers at the Aso Rock chapel prayed to God to bring lasting peace, stability and development to the country.

The president who was accompanied to the service was accompanied by his wife, Stella, the chairman of the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Chief Audu Ogbeh and the party's South-west zone national vice chairman, Chief Olabode George, said only God's mercy can make a nation to grow.

"We praise you and worship you for you are the Lord Almighty, the creator of the universe, may you continue to live in our life," he said.

At the special prayer session: the First Sermon was read by George while Mrs. Obasanjo read the second from the book of Ecclesiaste.

Also Governor James Ibori of Delta State has urged Muslims across the country to accept THISDAY's apology as well as Muslim leaders' advice to give peace a chance.

Ibori who made this appeal yesterday in a faxed statement he personally signed however admitted that the portion of the publication being complained of was not only provocative, but wrong moreso coming from an esteemed newspaper like THISDAY.

Ibori who recalled what had transpired in the last one week said it was regrettable that such development came at a time when the country was supposed to be hosting Miss World Pageant.

Besides, the governor said this period was also crucial in the sense that all hands should be on deck to ensure a successful return to civil rule.

"It is my considered opinion that what the newspaper wrote was wrong, thoughtless and provocative. I wish however, to join the offending newspaper and all Nigerians to appeal to our Muslim brothers and sisters to accept the apology of the newspaper and accept the advice of Muslim leaders to let the matter rest and give peace a chance.

"In the spirit of Ramadan, let us forgive and forget and join hands together to build a

united and prosperous Nigeria. May the blessings of Ramadan be upon us all", Ibori prayed.

Meanwhile, 80 Miss World contestants arrived in London yesterday after the organisers decided on Friday to move the contest from Abuja to London.

Crisis erupted in Kaduna in protest against a newspaper article believed to have blasphemed Prophet Mohammed. The crisis with religious colouration saw some Muslim fundamentalists attacking Christians and churches. The office of THISDAY in Kaduna and Bauchi were also burnt in protest against the publication of the offensive article.

At least 22 churches and 8 mosques were destroyed in the rampage, Shehu Sani of the Kaduna-based Civil Rights Congress told AP. Ten hotels were also badly damaged, said Sani, whose group said several people had been killed.

The violent protests were later directed at the insensitivity of Federal Government for hosting the Miss World competition in the month of Ramadan, an action the Muslims were opposed to.

The turn of events forced the organisers of the competition to move the venue of its grand finale to London while the contestants who were already in Nigeria were flown to London.

By yesterday morning, a tense calm was reported in Kaduna as the relieved contestants arrived at Gatwick Airport, London, on a chartered Cameroons Airlines Boeing 747.

Organisers said they hoped to put the "ugly incident" behind them by ensuring that when the contest was held on December 7 it would bear all the hallmarks of everything Nigerian.

"All we want to do now is to give Miss World 2002 the publicity it deserves," a spokeswoman told the UK's Press Association.

"I feel very well. I'm happy to be back in London," said Miss France Caroline Chamorand as she pushed her baggage trolley past waiting photographers.

"I am happy to be home, excited," said Miss England, 22-year-old Daniella Luan. "Obviously it's been quite daunting but I'm just happy to be home, looking forward to

seeing my family."

But she said her information about events in Nigeria had come from CNN reports as she was kept in her hotel for security reasons.

Before boarding her plane Miss Australia, Nicole Gazal, said most Nigerians supported the event. "I feel sorry for the Nigerian people," she told CNN.

"What I have seen the people really loved us staying in Nigeria. I think it is a shame a small number of people could cause such havoc ... and push the pageant away."

Several contestants hugged policewomen as they left a luxury hotel in the capital Abuja, where they had stayed under heavy guard during the violence between Christians and Muslims.

An article published by THISDAY on the beauty pageant had been seen as insulting to Muslims, particularly as it was published during the holy month of Ramadan.

Despite front-page apologies by the paper early in the week, Muslims rioted. Christians then retaliated against Muslims. The newspaper's offices in Kaduna were burned down and there were reports of churches and mosques being torched.

Contest spokeswoman Stella Din said the contestants were feeling "really miserable."

The contestants were under heavy guard while they were in Nigeria "They were never in any danger but there are times you have to step back and take steps. We are very sorry it has come to this," Din said.

"Even though we believe this violence is not connected to us ... we didn't want any more bloodshed."

The holding of the contest in a country where 50 percent of the population are Muslim and there has been pressure to introduce Sharia in some northern districts had already caused controversy.

At least five contestants failed to show up in Nigeria for the contest. Four said they were boycotting because of sentences passed by Nigerian Islamic courts sentencing Muslim women to death by stoning for having sex outside marriage.

The Miss World contest, now in its 53rd year, is watched on television by more than

two billion viewers worldwide, according to the pageant's Web site.

The current Miss World is Agbani Darego of Nigeria, -- it was her triumph last year that led to the country's decision to host the contest.

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A Further Letter of Apology from THISDAY Chairman

THIS DAY NOVE 25, 2002

The last one week has been a nightmare for all of us at THISDAY as we try to find answers to how all these have happened... When we founded THISDAY in 1995, it was to promote peace, order and good governance; it was to seek a better life for all the people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Our ethos was not to be offensive to any religion or to denigrate the cultural and religious values of our people.

I was thus aghast when last Sunday I learnt of the very offensive publication in The Saturday Newspaper. The Editor, Mr. Simon Kolawole, brought the publication to my attention with his hands trembling and his voice shaky. He only managed to reach me as I was preparing to travel to South Africa that evening on a THISDAY project. I immediately cancelled the trip after Mr. Kolawole explained to me that he had asked Miss Isioma Daniel (a Style Reporter that had only just joined THISDAY a few months back after a short journalism career in the UK) to write an introductory piece to his cover story on the Miss World contest when he found some offensive portions which he promptly edited and deleted on his personal (desk) computer. And in the heat of meeting production deadlines, he said he did not realise that the article had already been posted to the main network (computer) server and therefore failed to delete and save the corrections to the server, resulting in the inadvertent publication of the offensive material.

Mr. Kolawole said he woke up to this fact very late on Saturday, when he received copies of the day's newspapers, some 12 hours after THISDAY had been sold nationwide.

That instance, I immediately summoned a meeting of senior editors present including Mr. Eniola Bello, Alhaji Yusuph Olaniyonu and Dr. Amanze Obi to discuss the shocking development. We immediately drafted a retraction

and apology for publication the next day (Monday) and raised teams to begin to reach Muslim leaders across the country, following efforts already made by Mr. Kolawole himself. We notified the Muslim leaders and clerics of the grave errors, sought their forgiveness and intervention so as to avoid a violent response, given that misgivings over the Miss World contest were already boiling over. We reached out to religious and community leaders in Kano, Sokoto, Kaduna, Zaria, Abuja, Lagos, Ibadan and other cities where we could either get the leaders on telephone or visit them personally. We despatched different teams to explain our errors, seek forgiveness and request their intervention. We began publishing the retraction and apology that Monday, deliberately underplaying it so as not to raise further tensions until we had reached as many leaders as possible. (A more comprehensive apology was published on Thursday and Friday). While many of the leaders may have helped us calm tensions in Sokoto, Kano, Zaria, Jos, Bauchi, Lagos, Ibadan and other cities, we were sadly unsuccessful in Kaduna as riots broke out on Wednesday.

We are particularly pained and shaken by the loss of lives, damage to property and places of worship when on Thursday the riots went beyond the torching of the two THISDAY offices in Kaduna, and degenerated into an anti-Miss World protest. We pray for the repose of the souls of the dead as we continue to seek solace and quick recovery for the injured. We will work with the Federal Government, the Kaduna State Government, the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, the Jamat'ul Nasir Islam (JNI), the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), the Red Cross and other notable groups, in whatever way we can towards providing treatment and resettlement for all victims of the Kaduna riots.

We are still dazed by this sad development as we continue to hold our Muslim brothers and sisters in very high esteem. Indeed, most of my very best friends are Muslims. At least on two occasions during this Ramadan, I had the privilege to be at the homes of my brothers, Alhaji Aliko Dangote and Alhaji Tayo Amusan to break bread with them at the end of the day's fast. The moments were marked with a good number of other Muslim friends. Why then would I chair an institution that would be hostile and insensitive to my Muslim friends, brothers and sisters across the nation? And they are not few, except that I just can't begin to list names.

Even at THISDAY, almost 40 per cent of senior management staff, and 30 per cent of our 600 strong staff are Muslims. Even Mr. Simon Kolawole, the

Editor of The Saturday Newspaper told me that half of his family are Muslims as with millions of Yoruba families. Clearly, it was never our intention to be offensive to our Muslim friends and compatriots.

If we are to name two Nigerian Lagos-based newspapers that have sought to reflect the views, perspectives and interests of our compatriots in the Northern states, THISDAY will be a leading one. That is why we opened our Abuja offices and production facility to be closer to the needs and aspirations of our Northern brothers and sisters. That is why the North accepts us as one of their own newspapers. That is why we understand the hurt they feel about this unwholesome development from a newspaper they rightly consider theirs. A newspaper they fully embraced as our readership and circulation in the North is widespread.

We can only plead that we mean no harm. The error was totally unintended. The editor made some efforts to expunge the language of hate as we have no such thought towards our Muslim brothers and their religion...

That is why we undertook the "Meet-the-Nation" tour of the North to gain a deeper understanding of their society and values. And when the aircraft we chartered crashed on the way from Kano through Jos to Maiduguri, who were those who saved the lives of 14 of our most senior editors? Were they not Muslims from Maiduguri? Why would we now repay them by denigrating their religion and essence?

Whatever errors we made were not intentional. We seek forgiveness from all our Muslim brothers and sisters. When I was growing up my parents thought me one key lesson: When I make mistakes, I must first admit my mistakes, apologise and ensure I do not repeat them... At THISDAY we will do everything in our power to ensure this does not occur again...

First the THISDAY management has set up a team to thoroughly investigate this monumental lapse; if the editor is found to have been negligent he will be removed from office as a deterrent to others as we ensure due diligence in the handling of articles for publication. Mr. Kolawole was only recently made Editor to replace the former Editor who was found to be negligent, when he allowed unfounded allegations against President Olusegun Obasanjo to be published. Beyond that we have begun an internal review of our editing processes with a view to ensuring that we put more checks in the editing process, without relying too much on network technology and

displaced 6,000 families.

Governor Ahmed Makarfi of Kaduna State has condoled the bereaved families while Gov. James Ibori of Delta State has appealed to Muslims to give peace a chance in the spirit of the month of Ramadan.

Although, bodies of many of the riot victims have been claimed for burial, others are still in the morgue, creating health hazards. *Vanguard* learnt yesterday that the Nigerian Red Cross was making efforts to give the unclaimed victims a mass burial today.

And in a situation report on the riots yesterday, the Red Cross said 1,169 people were injured and evacuated to various hospitals. Besides, it said 6,000 families had been displaced so far and “are taking refuge in different locations within the city.”

!See box for details

The 1,000 people arrested in connection with the riots are expected to be charged to court today.

! Makarfi condoles families of riots victims

Gov. Ahmed Makarfi has expressed the state government’s condolences to the families of the victims of the latest riots in the state. He said in a statement in Kaduna, yesterday that government particularly regretted that lives lost in the incident were innocent. According to him, they knew nothing about what they were killed for in the “mindless madness.” Said he: “Government wishes to extend its most sincere and heartfelt sympathy and condolences to the entire good people of the state over the unfortunate incident in the state capital.” “Government particularly wishes to condole with families of all those who lost their lives in this mindless madness while pursuing legitimate means of livelihood in most case, not even knowing what was happening. May God give all of us the fortitude to bear the losses.

“Government also sympathises with all those maimed, injured as well as those who lost their properties and other possessions. May God expedite their recovery processes. Government wishes to further assure the good and peace-loving people of Kaduna State that more measures have been put in place to ensure their own protection and that of their properties.”

Alhaji Makarfi praised the role of traditional and religious leaders in the state, especially the Emir of Zazzau in dousing the situation in the state. "Their assistance went a long way in ensuring a quick return of peace," he said.

The governor added that he appreciated the various roles played by groups and individuals in complementing government's efforts in containing the situation.

Ibori appeals for peace

On his part, Gov. James Ibori of Delta appealed for peace, saying: "In the past one week, the country has been witnessing upheavals in some parts, particularly Kaduna and Abuja, occasioned by a newspaper report which offended the sensitivity of our Muslim brothers and sisters."

"It is regrettable that this development is coming at a time the country was hosting the Miss World Pageant with all the attendant focus on Nigeria. This is also a crucial period in the life of our nascent democracy when all hands must be on deck to ensure a successful transition from one civilian administration to another.

"It is my considered opinion that what the newspaper wrote was wrong, thoughtless and provocative. I wish, however, to join the offending newspaper and all Nigerians to appeal to our Muslim brothers and sisters to accept the apology of the newspaper and accept the advice of Muslim leaders to let the matter rest and give peace a chance.

"In the spirit of Ramadan, let us forgive and forget and join hands together to build a united and prosperous Nigeria.

"May the blessings of Ramadan be upon us all. Amen."

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BBC

Monday, 25 November, 2002, 11:42 GMT

Nigeria buries its dead

Thousands have fled the clashes

Funerals are taking place on Monday in the northern Nigerian city of Kaduna following violence between Christians and Muslims in which more than 200 people are known to have died.

Calm has returned to the city after four days of disturbances linked to the Miss World beauty contest which has now been relocated to London.

Churches and mosques were attacked

In addition to 215 bodies counted on the streets and in mortuaries, others were thought to have been buried by their families, Nigerian Red Cross president Emmanuel Ijewere was quoted as saying by the Associated Press news agency.

He added that there had been more killings, despite the curfew imposed on the city where security forces have been trying to contain the situation.

The BBC's Yusuf Sarki Muhammad in Kaduna says the figures are credible and could even be on the low side.

Arrests

The funerals are taking place as hundreds of people arrested during the riots are expected to start appearing in court in Kaduna on Monday.

Muslim defendants will be tried by the Islamic court of Kaduna State, while Christians will appear before civilian jurisdictions, the spokesman for the governor of Kaduna State, Maktar Sirajo, told the French news agency AFP.

Thousands have been displaced by the violence which was sparked by a newspaper article about the Miss World pageant.

The venue was hastily switched to London, hours after the disturbances spread to the Nigerian capital, Abuja.

Beauty queens - who had spent 10 days attending preliminary events mainly in Christian-dominated southern areas of Nigeria - arrived in London on Sunday aboard a specially chartered plane.

They expressed their relief at having escaped the violence.

The competition is scheduled to go ahead on 7 December.

'No provocation'

A tense calm was reported on Sunday and early Monday in Kaduna, which has a large Christian minority.

On Sunday, people ventured out to try to find food in local markets and some to attend church services, AP new agency reported.

BOER

I salute the courage of the contestants. They came all the way here despite the conspiracy of the international press

Nigerian Information Minister Jerry Gana

Violence subsided on Saturday as soldiers enforced a night-time curfew.

It is estimated that more than 1,000 were injured and more than 11,000 made homeless in the clashes.

Civil rights activists said more than 20 churches and 8 mosques had been burnt down in the city as well as a number of hotels.

They also said there had been allegations that some members of the security forces had killed civilians without provocation.

Press 'conspiracy'

The troubles began with a protest by Muslims in Kaduna last Wednesday over a newspaper article they saw as trivialising their objections to the contest, and escalated on Thursday when the worst of the violence appears to have taken place.

Nigeria won the right to stage the pageant after Nigerian Agbani Darego was crowned Miss World 2001 - the first black African to win the title.

Ben Maray, the chairman of the Nigerian organising committee, said a huge opportunity to showcase Nigeria had been lost.

Nigeria's Information Minister Jerry Gana pointed a finger at the foreign and domestic media for his country's failed attempt to host the competition.

Miss World contestants: Some pulled out earlier

"I salute the courage of the contestants. They came all the way here despite the conspiracy of the international press... particularly the British press," he said on state radio.

"There's an international conspiracy just to show that an African country like Nigeria cannot host this thing. I think Nigerians should be really angry with the international press," he said, quoted by the French news agency, AFP.

He also criticised the Lagos-based ThisDay newspaper, which published the article which offended Muslims and sparked the violence.

ThisDay said its editor had been detained by police and that the reporter who wrote the article had resigned.

The article, which the paper retracted and repeatedly publicly apologised for, suggested that the Prophet Mohammed would have probably chosen to marry one of the Miss World contestants had he witnessed the beauty pageant.

Two years ago, Kaduna saw more than 2,000 deaths in clashes between Christians and Muslims.

Have you witnessed the violence in Nigeria? Send us your experiences using the form below.

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Friday, December 13, 2002 THE JAPAN TIMES
Roots of Nigeria's sectarian strife run deep
By JOHN EDWARD PHILIPS
Special to The Japan Times

The riots that drove the Miss World Pageant from Nigeria this year have focused the world's attention on the religious conflict in that major oil-exporting country and its implications for Nigerian stability.

Religious conflict and Islamic Shariah law are not new to Nigeria. They have been part of life in the territory now known as Nigeria before it was given that name.

Most of what is now northern Nigeria was part of the Sokoto Caliphate before British colonialism created the entity known as Nigeria. The Sokoto Caliphate was founded in 1804 by the Islamic "mujaddid" (renewer) Usman Danfodiyo. This scholar led an Islamic revolution that replaced many of the small kingdoms in the area with a large empire practicing strict Islamic Shariah law. At the time of the European colonial conquest, the Sokoto Caliphate was the largest state in tropical Africa.

British policy in Africa emphasized "indirect rule" using already existing rulers as part of colonial administration. The emirs of the caliphate were co-opted into the British system, as was Islamic law, although harsher punishments, such as stoning for adultery, were not permitted. The people of the area were largely cut off from outside influences and Western education. In a rare deviation from typical colonial practice in Africa, an African language was used as the language of administration -- not to promote African culture but simply to insulate the region from outside influences.

Other peoples in the area, however, were resistant to Islamization. Many smaller societies in the Nigerian "middle belt" immediately south of the caliphate had been involved in complex relations of trade, warfare and slave raiding with the caliphate. While heavily influenced by the Islamic civilization of the caliphate they were also in conflict with it. When colonialism came, many of them eagerly converted to Christianity and today their descendants are among the most devout Christians in Nigeria.

With the independence of Nigeria these groups and many others were suddenly responsible for administering a country to which few of them felt much loyalty. One prominent Nigerian national leader, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, referred to Nigeria as "a mere geographical expression." An attempt by the first military government to create a unitary state was explosive, and Nigeria was only held together in the Biafra war as a federal system of several states. Each locality demanded the right to its own state

and the ability to manage its own affairs without interference from the central government. The demand for more states has been one of the most important political issues in Nigeria since the end of the Biafra war.

For many in the north this demand for local autonomy meant Shariah law. One of the changes that had been instituted at independence was that Islamic law would apply only to personal matters, civil and commercial law. Criminal law was reformed, and unified across the whole country. Thus, ironically, independence did more than British colonial rule had done to introduce British law to northern Nigeria.

This supposedly modern system was very alien to the villagers of northern Nigeria and has never been very popular with them. Whatever the relative merits of the British and Islamic legal systems, the Nigerian state became increasingly corrupt. The supposedly British legal system in Nigeria never involved trial by jury, and it was never understood, much less appreciated and supported, by ordinary peasants in the villages. These people quickly learned that justice could not be sought in police stations and law courts, but in their chiefs' huts, where they could settle differences with their neighbors in traditional ways.

Democratization gave these peasants an opportunity to legitimize their traditional system. An underdog gubernatorial candidate in the obscure state of Zamfara promised villagers that he would implement Islamic law. His promise was carried out by passing much of the Shariah code as state law in accordance with the constitution of Nigeria. His supporters claim that Shariah law as passed in Zamfara (and now other states as well) will pass legal muster at any judicial court in Nigeria. No one has yet dared to challenge them.

Christians in the Nigerian middle belt have not welcomed the enactment of Shariah law. Even some Muslims have objected to the way it has been implemented. Conflict over Shariah law has led to a number of violent clashes and much loss of life and property in the region. It has also led to the creation of state sanctioned vigilante groups to enforce shariah law. Other bodies of vigilantes have appeared in southern Nigeria as well, where they compete with the federal police, with or without the sanction of the state government. Whether the federal government will be forced to recognize such groups as state police forces remains to be seen, but they have been evolving into de facto state police in many areas.

One ironic effect of the passage of Shariah law has been the weakening of Islamist movements. Such groups often attracted support by threatening to lead Islamic revolutions to impose Shariah law. Since more traditionally oriented Muslim leaders have been able to put Islamic law into practice democratically, extremist groups have attracted less support, though they are still a force to be reckoned with.

Whether the latest riots in Kaduna were a planned attack by such groups, or a spontaneous outburst of anger at certain insensitive articles in the Nigerian media (which has long remained the freest in Africa), remains to be seen. What cannot be doubted is that the Nigerian government must either apprehend and punish the perpetrators, or prepare for worse violence in the future. To allow those behind such outbreaks to go unpunished or, worse, to punish the wrong people (as has allegedly happened after other riots) is only to encourage further violence in the future.

Whether the Nigerian federation is finally drifting apart or not, we do not yet know. Nigeria's political fault lines are far more than merely religious and ethnic. It is certain, however, that the fate of this major oil-producing nation will have grave repercussions for not only West Africa but for the whole continent and beyond.

John Edward Philips, a professor at Hirosaki University, is the author of "Spurious Arabic: Hausa and Colonial Nigeria."

The Japan Times: Dec. 13, 2002
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Southern Kaduna women group demands separate state

From Saxone Akhaine, Kaduna GUARDIAN DEC 16 2002

FOR hundreds of women under the aegis of Southern Kaduna Joint Women Forum, only a separate state can end the incessant crises in the state which was recently rocked by a fresh religious crisis over the *Miss World* pageant.

The women, who also alleged that fake policemen joined in the killing of Christians during the crisis, demanded to know who armed and provided uniforms for them. According to them, if no answers are provided to these posers, the Kaduna State Police Commissioner should resign or be sacked.

Speaking at a press conference after the women ended their meeting at Bamu Hotel to deliberate on the latest crisis, their President, Mrs. Anna Nanuji declared: "We, the women and our children are always on the receiving end of every aftermath of riot in the state. It is either our husbands and sons are killed or our houses get burnt, leaving us as refugees in barracks".

Alleging that they are tired of running, crying, being maimed or even killed in the state as a result of violence, Mrs. Nanuji cited the February and May 2000 crises, the Federal College of Education crisis and last months' violence as events that any responsible government in power should seek urgent and permanent solutions to.

According to the women leader, the government of Ahmed Mohammed Makarfi has been paying lip-service to security matters in the state.

"It is sad that we have not had enough protection since inception of the government of Makarfi".

She also accused the police of supporting rioters "by turning their fire-arms on innocent people".

Said Nanuji: "Those fake policemen and soldiers who were caught shooting Christians at Nasarawa, Sabon-Tasha and Television Villages, who sent them? And who gave them uniforms?"

"If no answers are provided to these questions, we advise the state police commissioner to resign his appointment or be sacked by the Federal Government".

The women declared that "the rise of terrorism in Nigeria and indeed, Kaduna State is worse than in other parts of the world".

"Ours is a blatant face-to-face attack on innocent citizens where their houses and places of worship are torched by Moslem fanatics. These fanatics are trained in certain places in Kaduna and Abuja. Their target is not only to destroy Christians but to also destabilise the entire nation politically".

Mrs. Nanuji also fingered the policy of the state government in the area of employment as fuelling crises in the state.

"For example, bonafide indigenes of Kaduna State are marginalised to make room for the employment or appointment of people from other northern states and neighbouring countries like Niger, Mali and Senegal, all in the name of Islam".

"It is only in Kaduna State that appointments and promotions are not made on merits. It is only in Kaduna that you find a Level 12 officer supervising Level 14 officer. It is only in Kaduna State that your name John or Daniel will disqualify you for the next rank, even if you deserve it", she alleged.

Nanuji declared: "It is our great desire to have a new state for peace and understanding to come our way".

"We are appealing to all well-meaning Nigerians to help us find solution to this state of ours because those we entrusted with this responsibility are not giving us expected results".

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Ohanaeze probes Kaduna killings GUARDIAN DEC 16, 2002

OHANAEZE Ndigbo, the Igbo socio-cultural organisation, has constituted a legal committee to study the killing of Igbo in some parts of North during the recent clashes on the *Miss World* pageant. A statement signed by the organisation's national publicity secretary, Chief Hypolyte Ogboko, said the committee is headed by Hon. Justice D.O. Egbu, but was, however, silent on the constitution of its membership.

It condemned the face-off leading to the killings and destruction of property and described it as a "mad and barbaric act."

The body restated its resolve to ensure that an Igboman emerges the president of the country come 2003 and appealed to the people not to do anything that would undermine its actualisation, including statements capable of sending bad signals.

Ohanaeze further maintained that it would no longer tolerate a change in the office of the Senate President, insisting that the incumbent holder, Chief Anyim Pius Anyim, has not been found wanting by the Senate.

It also passed a vote of confidence on the administration of Anyim.

The body also renewed its call for the convocation of national conference, saying it was the only way the country could be saved from disintegration.

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