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## **Dozens Killed in Bauchi Religious Crisis**

By George Akpayen and Godwin Egbara

Daily Independent (27.07.2009) / HRWF (28.07.2009) - Website: <http://www.hrwf.org> - Email: [info@hrwf.net](mailto:info@hrwf.net) - Bauchi returned to its violent ways on Sunday morning, leaving 200 people dead, in a cue taken from neighbouring Maiduguri where, on Friday, the residents had a sleepless night.

A locally made bomb exploded in the home of a hard line Islamist in Maiduguri, killing one, and leaving others in a state of coma.

Those who died in Bauchi were also Islamic fundamentalists, known as "Boko Haram." Several others were severely injured.

A clash in the city in February between Muslim and Christian communities had left four persons dead.

Boko Haram members, who belong to the Taliban, first struck the Federal Low-cost Housing Estate in Bauchi, and killed military personnel in an exchange of gun fire.

The sect, which opposes anything Western, went berserk because the state government prevents its members from having their way.

Boko Haram detests Western education, and some of the members have withdrawn from the Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi.

The members had been planning a demonstration in Bauchi for a long time but were not granted a permit because of fears that their doctrine, if preached publicly, will cause a religious crisis.

The teachings of the sect are said to be completely contrary to those of other Islamic sects on peaceful coexistence.

Hundreds of members of the sect trooped to the Dutsen Tanshi police station on Sunday and chased away officers. They vandalised the station but could not break into the armoury.

A distress call to command headquarters brought a reinforcement to confront the attackers, some of whom were felled by police bullets, and others injured.

"We have received a total of 42 bodies," Awwal Isa, a Nurse at Bauchi Specialist Hospital, confirmed. "The dead bodies are victims of people fighting between security personnel and members of the Taliban."

Police Public Relations Officer, Mohammed Barau, explained that more policemen were deployed to ensure the security of lives and property.

"Our men succeeded in repelling the dawn attack by the Taliban. They wanted to steal weapons from the police station. The situation is now under control. More members of the organisation are being arrested," Barau said.

Measures are now in place to prevent the spread of the riot, he assured.

A team of soldiers and policemen has gone round villages to fish out the fundamentalists who escaped from their base in Bauchi.

Several have been arrested, but some are believed to be hiding in the surrounding hills.

Weapons recovered from them include an AK47 rifle, assorted ammunition, military uniforms, explosives, sewing machines, power generator, motorcycles, foodstuffs, and roofing sheets.

Force Headquarters Public Relations Officer, Emmanuel Ojukwu, confirmed that some arrests have been made.

Police Affairs Minister, Ibrahim Lame, said Inspector General of Police, Ogonnaya Onovo, has been directed to ensure the security of lives and property nationwide.

In as much as the government is committed to the freedom of religion, he stressed, it will not condone fundamentalism that breaks down law and order.

The explosion in Maiduguri happened five hours after the Borno State police command paraded members of a notorious Islamic sect caught with locally made bombs and other explosives.

The incident, which occurred at the railway terminus area at about 7 p.m., claimed the life of Hassan Sanni Balami, the owner of the home, and also blew up the roof of his apartment and almost led to the collapse of the building.

State Commander of Operation Flush II, a joint security task force set up by the state government, Colonel Ben Ahanotu, described security in Maiduguri as tense.

He said for bombs to explode right in the bedroom of a sect member showed that other sect members possess such lethal weapons all over the city.

Eyewitnesses to the explosion, which chopped off the arms and legs of Balami, said it catapulted the other sect member who was with him over the blown off roof and landed him outside the compound.

The bones and pieces of flesh of Balami littered the compound, as explosives from the components of the bombs continued to blast off, sending reporters scampering for cover.

Security analysts said the bomb must have gone off accidentally as the deceased and his wounded colleague were inspecting or trying to couple the weapon.

A page of a book with sketches of how to make bomb and explosives was recovered from the debris in the room, which suggested the bomb might have blown off at the time of coupling.

Balami's wife, Zainab, a mother of two who is also pregnant, said she was not aware that her husband had a visitor in his room as she was busy cooking in the kitchen when she heard the explosion.

She disclosed at Operation Flush headquarters, where she was questioned, that she had time without number warned her husband, who was a Prison Officer until he abandoned his job to follow the Islamic sect led by Muhammed Yusuf.

The sect members had on Friday told journalists at police headquarters that they were arming themselves with lethal weapons to fight against the police and everyone else who are against their views and existence.

According to Ahanotu and police officers, the sect members had named rival Islamic scholars who oppose their doctrine as targets, and promised to blow off their mosques and other worshipping places.

Governor Ali Modu Sheriff described the incident as unfortunate and condemnable, and pledged that the government is on top of the situation, and will continue to protect the lives and properties of all residents.

He urged all to be calm and go about their normal activities as security measures are in place.

On the concern of the public that Yusuf, 39, who has been named as the one inciting them to build arms, Sheriff said: "We have severally arrested him but when tried in the court of law, he is released for want of evidence.

"But we will not give up until we see the end of this menace."

Some normalcy has returned to Maiduguri, even with the fear and tension all over the metropolis.

The presence of Operation Flush personnel provides assurance for people to go about their businesses.

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## **Police demolish Anglican church in Ugbuwangue community**

By Emma Arubi

Vanguard (07.04.2009) / HRWF (08.04.2009) - Website: <http://www.hrwf.org> - Email: [info@hrwf.net](mailto:info@hrwf.net) - Heavily armed Mobile Policemen last week demolished St. Andrew's Anglican Church building in Ugbuwangue community allegedly on "orders from above", just as the Bishop of the Warri Diocese of the Church worshipped with the congregation under the scorching sun last Sunday.

The fierce-looking security operatives, who came with a payload to execute the demolition order, brooked no-nonsense from anyone, as they declined efforts made to ascertain where they came from and who ordered them.

It was learnt that the destruction of the Church building was a mistake on the part of the security men because the church building site was legally acquired from the Federal Ministry of Works and Housing. It is also not cited on estate land.

When Vanguard visited the demolished property, the Pastor in-Charge, Mr. Gordons Oghenevo produced all the documents to prove that the said portion of land was duly approved by the Secretary, Land Use and Allocation Committee of the Federal Ministry of Works and Housing, Mr. Ike Odoe, in 1996.

Mr. Oghenevo appealed to the Delta State government to re-build the church and equip same to enable them continue in their task of soul winning for Christ.

Meanwhile, a large parcel of land belonging to the government, where a housing estate is situated, has been illegally fenced off by land speculators from the community and hired out to cattle rearers along the NPA/Ugbuwangue expressway.

The land speculator and cow dealers had, by their action, blocked the proposed access way to the estate, making it difficult for the contractor about to construct an access road into the estate to mobilize to site.

Vanguard gathered that the action was taken to pave way for the contractor to mobilize to site without let or hindrance by anyone.

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## **Shariah Committee destroys N50 million drinks**

By Ibrahim Shuaibu

This Day (13.01.2009) / HRWF (15.01.2009) - Website: <http://www.hrwf.org> - Email: [info@hrwf.net](mailto:info@hrwf.net) - Kano State Shariah implementation arm has destroyed nine truck loads of beer and non-alcoholic drinks worth over N50 million, despite the suit at High Court filed by Hoteliers Association for a stay of action.

Trucks conveying the drinks to Kano from Kaduna were impounded at Dankatsale, a suburb located on Kaduna-Kano Express Road, by the state Sharia guard, Hisbah.

The trucks were said to have been ambushed at midnight by Hisbah operatives, who promptly ordered the truck drivers to divert them to their head office.

At the Hisbah headquarters, one of the operatives allegedly took control of one of the trucks, believed to be loaded with 800 cartons of Malta Guinness, which somersaulted into a deep pit, with all its contents destroyed, while the vehicle was damaged beyond repairs.

Speaking to THISDAY, President, Hoteliers Association in Kano, Chief Olayiwola Adeaga, confirmed the seizure, but expressed surprise on how one of the trucks with plate number XA 112 TNG loaded with alcoholic drinks could not be accounted for by Hisbah operatives who impounded it.

According to him, Hisbah's action was provocative and capable of degenerating to a breach of the peace in Kano.

He said "to be frank and sincere, we have been groaning in pains, because we have found ourselves to be living under religious bondage, which has adversely affected our business, the destruction of the items will send us into a traumatic situation with members of our families and employees, which might lead us into financial and mental retardation."

He said there was a subsisting Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Hisbah and Hoteliers Association to shield contents of the trucks from public view before conveying them into the Pyramid City, which was complied with by the association.

He expressed worry over Hisbah's refusal to transfer the case to the state Police Command for investigation, as ordered by Kano State Commissioner of Police.

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