

## 80 People killed and over 44 People injured in communal violence in Kaduna State, Nigeria

### BACKGROUND



*Pic 1.1 : Map of Kaduna State, Nigeria<sup>2</sup>*

- Kaduna State is located in the North-West Region of Nigeria and has a population of 6, 113, 503 (2006 population census). In 2018, the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics estimated the total population to about 8,525,366 in Kaduna State<sup>1</sup>.
- The State shares borders with Zamfara, Kano, Katsina, Nassarawa, Niger, Plateau, Bauchi States and Abuja-FCT. There are 23 Local Government Areas (LGA's) in the State with over 60 ethnic groups. The State is divided into two major zones; the Muslim dominated North and the Christian dominated South.
- Kaduna State has been a major flashpoint to various dimensions of communal clashes, ethnic agitations, ethno-religious violence, kidnapping, gang-related violence, armed banditry and farmer-herders conflict that have led to huge humanitarian crisis, weakened social capital and breakdown of democratic norms and values.
- The deep-seated mistrust between the different ethnic and religious groups in the State constantly fanned the flames of violent conflicts mainly in Southern Kaduna. LGAs in Southern Kaduna zone include; Chikun, Kajuru, Kauru, Lere, Kachia, Zangon Kataf, Kaura, Kagarko, Jema'a, Sanga, Jaba.

### INCIDENT PROFILE

The vulnerability of Kaduna State to ethno-religious intolerance predates decades with records of widespread carnage. On Thursday, October 18, 2018, a cumulative total of 55 people were reported dead with several others injured in a religious crisis between youth groups at a market in Kasuwan Magani Village, Kajuru LGA of Kaduna State<sup>3</sup>. Several houses and vehicles were reportedly burnt down with business activities shut down in the incident. However, Officials of the State Police Command have arrested 22 suspects allegedly involved in the outbreak of violence.<sup>4</sup>

While the immediate cause of the clash could not be fully ascertained, data obtained from community residents revealed that the violence which escalated to other areas in the State started at Mararabo Rido area, following the arrest of an undisclosed male suspect by Police Officers on allegations of secretly recording a Pastors' sermon at a Church with his phone<sup>5</sup>. As investigations have commenced to unravel the remote cause of the crisis, the Catholic Archbishop of Kaduna State, Most Rev. Mathew Ndagoso linked its escalation to rumour mongering<sup>6</sup>, pitting people of different religion against each other.

In furtherance to the heightened tension over anticipated reprisals, the Kaduna State Government imposed a 24-hour curfew in a bid to curb the spread of violence and maintain peace and security. Amid this security intervention, series of violence were recorded in various parts of Kaduna Metropolis that resulted in the death of 22 people with 44 others injured<sup>7</sup> on October 21, 2018. On another incident the next day, suspected gunmen dressed in Military camouflage allegedly killed 3 people in Narayi Community, Chikun LGA of Kaduna State<sup>8</sup>. Preliminary investigations revealed that the attackers claimed to be Vigilante members from Barnawa community. The victims were reportedly arrested with their dead bodies later found in the area.

In view of these security concerns and the need to prevent mortality, the Management of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) suspended indefinitely the orientation course for prospective Corp members to Kaduna State<sup>9</sup> with flight operations to the State temporarily suspended<sup>10</sup> by some Airline due to the curfew imposed by the State Government. Affected communities have staged series of demonstrations against the killings in the State, as community youths allegedly wielding knives, machetes, swords and sticks fuelled by fears that the crisis has the potential to envelope the Southern Kaduna zone have resorted to self-defence by laying siege on major roads linking their communities to avert 'surprise attacks'.



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## **RISK ANALYSIS:**

The relatively peaceful Southern Kaduna zone in Kaduna State witnessed renewed tension that assumed a religious dimension. Amid widely reported communal clashes in Nigeria, Kaduna State has been identified as one of the most volatile in Northern Nigeria where ethnic and religious identities are often used as rallying point to mobilize and perpetuate acts of violence, which results in extensive destruction of properties/livelihoods, high fatality and break down of socio-cultural values. This has negative effects on the country's national security, stability and integration<sup>11</sup>.

The prevailing security challenges in the State is indicative of an existing mutual suspicion between ethnic and religious groups that has overtime strained inter-group relations and degenerated into violence. There is no gainsaying that violence grounded on "ethnic brethren" attracts intense emotions and a sense of existential threat owing to the dominant thinking that killing of rival ethnic or religious groups appears a reasonable and justified action<sup>12</sup>. Despite significant progress made by the Kaduna State Government in improving the security environment and countering extremist tendencies, the need to minimize the intensity and impact of the recent violence becomes imperative, as affected communities are still counting their losses. However, windows of opportunity exist to foster collaborative peace building by State and non-State actors towards transformation and regeneration of the zone, as Military intervention alone targeted at resolving conflicts with ethnic and religious undertones may lead to further escalation of the conflict situation.

It is also pertinent to mention that, the ensuing violent conflict in Kaduna State further heightens its vulnerability to extremist attacks. Over the years, the trend in the modus operandi of Boko Haram (BH) in Northern Nigeria suggests exploitation of such vulnerabilities in communities to perpetuate their violent attacks and recruitment. Akin to this, since the current violent conflict in Kaduna is largely underpinned by religion, it offers an opportunity for BH to develop narratives to enhance their recruitment drive and attacks.

## **MECHANISMS FOR INTERVENTIONS:**

- Security Operatives including Officials of the Nigeria Police Force, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, (NSCDC), Department of State Security (DSS) and State Vigilantes have been deployed to ensure compliance with the curfew imposed in the State through security patrol of affected areas. Though the curfew has been partially relaxed in some areas including Kasuwan Magani and Kujama, the 24-hour curfew is still effective in areas where pockets of violence and tension are evident- Kabala West, Kabala Doki, Sabon-Tasha, Narayi and Maraban Rido.<sup>13</sup>
- The Inspector General of Police (IGP) deployed the Assistant Inspector General of Police, Zone 7 Headquarters in charge of Kaduna and Niger states, as well as the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) to lead the Police Special Intervention Force at Kasuwan Magani Community with the view to nip the crisis in the bud, while the Kaduna State Governor has commenced plans with the Kaduna State Police Command to establish Police Divisions in Kasuwan Magani, Narayi and Sabon Tasha areas where violence were largely perpetuated.
- As part of measures to scale up security and make communities accountable for the actions, the Kaduna State Government has pledged to enforce provisions of the Riots Damage Law of 1958, the Collective Punishment Law of 1915 and the Peace Preservation Law of 1917. These laws impose cost on communities that permit violence<sup>14</sup>.
- Security engagement between the State Police Command, Youth Leaders, Traditional and Religious leaders ongoing to prevent a recurrence of violence, while Officials of the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) have began distribution of relief materials to affected victims.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- The resolution by the Kaduna State Governor to implement the Riots Damage Law of 1958, the Collective Punishment Law of 1915 and the Peace Preservation Law of 1917 is commendable; this should be enforced alongside a legally constituted panel of local peacemakers comprising of Women and Youth groups, Traditional/Religious leaders and Civil Society Organisations across communities in the State.



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- The State Government in collaboration with Traditional and Religious leaders should address the issues of suspicion and distrust existing between ethnic and religious groups in the State with effective counter-messaging targeted at dousing tension and promoting social cohesion.
- There should be a deliberate attempt by the Federal and State Government to invest in peace education through curriculum review for Primary and Secondary schools. Special attention should also be placed on the behavioural modification of youths, as this will contribute to changing the narratives from being seen as 'perpetuators of violence' to 'promoters of peace'.
- There is also the need to strengthen inter and intra-religious dialogue in communities as part of long-term resilience strategies to assuage sectarian violence in Kaduna State and beyond. This must involve key stakeholders – Traditional Authorities, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), Religious groups, State Security agencies, the Media, Youth and Women groups and representatives of ethnic groups among others, aimed at fostering tolerance and respect for religious, ethnic and political diversity in the State.

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