

Appendix 22:

THE PHANTOM CRESCENT

THE GUARDIAN Oct 19 2007

NOTE: This appendix contains 9 different articles. Article no. 9 is by your author, Jan Boer. You can locate each article by finding <xxxx> for each. They are named Document A., B., C., etc.

DOCUMENT 1:

Shehu Sani and the Sharia establishment

By Reuben Abati

IT is free speech that is on trial at the Upper Sharia Court in Tudun Wada, Kaduna where last week a ban was imposed on the staging, the circulation and by extension the reading of a play titled *The Phantom Crescent*, written by Shehu Sani, a civil rights activist and author. In the play, Sani is said to have raised uncomfortable questions about the Othman Dan Fodio Jihad, and the adoption of the Sharia as a criminal orthodoxy in some states in Northern Nigeria. He argues that religion is being used by the Northern elite to hoodwink the poor and that the Sharia is no more than a discriminatory system which promotes double standards.

In the play, Aminu, leader of a group called the Redemption Front, was said to have fulminated about the Sharia: "They said it is against Shari'ah to take alcohol, while most of them take it. They said it is against Shari'ah to patronise prostitutes while most of them do it. They said it is illegal to engage in gambling while most of them do it. They said we cannot listen to music or dance, while most of them do. Today is the end of their hypocrisy."

Shehu Sani had planned to stage the play on October 13, at Gamji Gate, Kaduna, but he was stopped by a court order. A concerned citizen, Alhaji Abdullahi Mohammed, leader of the Concerned Shari'ah Forum (CSF), had gone to court to stop the production. In a motion *ex parte*, he asked the Upper Sharia Court to issue an order restraining Malam Sani, "himself, servant, agents or privies from, selling or in any way circulating the book titled, 'The Phantom Crescent'." The plaintiff also asked the court to issue "other orders as this honourable court may deem fit in the circumstances to prevent the defendant from circulating the book or staging a play on the practice of Shari'ah in the Northern states." The plaintiff's request was granted,

But Shehu Sani is adamant. He insists that he will challenge the banning of the book all the way to the Supreme Court if need be. An agricultural engineer and former student leader, Sani was one of the 43 persons who were accused of plotting to overthrow the Abacha government in March 1995. At the time, Sani, barely 30, was Vice Chairman of the Campaign for Democracy. He was found guilty of being accessory to treason and sentenced to life imprisonment which was later commuted to 15 years. He is currently the leader of a group known as the Socialist Front (SF) and the Northern Civil Rights Society Coalition (NCRSC). Writers who are confronted with the scourge of censorship are usually reluctant to give up their vision of reality and Shehu Sani is no exception.

In his words: "The play is simply aimed at sensitising the citizenry, particularly Nigerians who live in the states that operate the Sharia law system. The objective is to educate and enlighten the citizenry on how they can defend and protect their fundamental human rights as guaranteed by the Nigerian constitution and all conventions to which this country is a signatory. The play that was aborted was also intended to send a message to some of the northern governors that are implementing Sharia in their states. It is a reality in this part of the country that the political class, in collaboration with clerics and traditional rulers, has continued to manipulate religion for its narrow gains. They have continued to use religion to dominate and oppress the people, and to protect and preserve their class and socio-economic interests. As a people living in a democracy and as the pillars of the struggle for democracy in

Nigeria, I felt that there should be the use of this medium to educate and enlighten the citizenry. We believe that for the past eight years since the introduction or launching of the Sharia legal code in the northern states, all the promises that have been made by the politicians have not come to pass. They advertised the code as the solution to all the socio-economic problems that have bedevilled this part of the country, but eight years after, there has been no change.

We have seen a systematic and institutional looting of the treasury of the states by governors who had paraded themselves as Sharia-compliant. We have seen the application of double standards on the sides of these governors. We've seen the clear cases of human rights abuses perpetrated by the so-called Hisbah, the Sharia enforcement police. They have become an instrument of repression in the hands of governors who operate Sharia in their states. We have seen cases whereby the opposition in those states was muzzled, on the grounds that any act of opposition to government policies within the state is a sacrilege or a confrontation against the Islamic religion. We have seen cases whereby labour activists themselves were muzzled and people with divergent political opinions were harassed and intimidated; and everyone is supposed to be silent because, as they say, religion is a very sensitive issue.

What playwrights, authors and human rights activists like me believe is that it should not be so, and we thought that with a play like this, people can better be sensitised. This play, which I have called "The Phantom Crescent," is not the first one I have written. I have written a number of books that touch on diverse subjects, but those who are now confronting us saw this particular one as a serious threat to them and they went to court and got an injunction to stop us. I wrote the book, published it and circulated invitations for the play to be staged but I got a court order that it cannot go on."

It is difficult to improve upon Sani's summary of the theme of his own play. And he is not the only one who holds this opinion. The Sharia became in the hands of those Governors who promoted it recently another tool of political opportunism. The difference between Sani and those who have taken him to court is ideological. He is a Northerner. He is a Moslem as well. Perhaps if he had been an outsider, a different construction could have been attached to his exercise of intellectual freedom. Sani's right to free speech should be defended. And it is reassuring that the presiding judge himself has drawn attention to the inviolability of the individual's right in this regard.

What we are further confronted with is the paradox of free speech: can anyone in seeking to assert his own right to hold an opinion, stop others from expressing theirs? Those who ban books, or burn books and libraries are guilty of this contradiction. The challenge is one of intellectual freedom, namely that a violation of the right to free speech denies the individual author of a basic entitlement, and prevents others from listening to whatever views are expressed and further compromises their ability to make a choice to believe or disbelieve.

The thinking that a piece of written or expressed opinion can be injurious to the health of a community, or to a belief system, or the prevailing order, momentarily and eternally, is a dangerous myth. It has been promoted since the burning of books and the burial of scholars by China's Qin dynasty in the 3rd Century BC and the destruction of the library at Alexandria. It is also a living phenomenon of our time. Books continue to be banned across the world, for reasons that are either personal, moral, religious or political.

In Nigeria, ideologues and bigots are quick to ban anything that is contrary to their own views or beliefs or recommend its banning or they take serious offence at any expression that remotely seeks to disturb their notion of reality. Many of the gladiators who take up the fight do not need to have seen the material: a report of its alleged offensiveness is enough. And so mere suspicion of mischief, or its amplification could result in violent reactions, the effect of which could be censorship, physical violence, the flight of the target into exile, or deaths. Two recent examples: Isioma Daniels, the ThisDay newspaper reporter, who was hounded into exile, and the killings that followed the reported publication of a certain cartoon in a Danish newspaper. The cause of censorship is not always religious. Nigeria's political leaders also have a record of opposition to the cultural establishment.

But it is usually the insecurity of those who oppose the creative intellectual that is the problem. Pope Gregory IX ordered that Jewish literature should be burned. It is amazing how some of the books that are now considered classics or are counted among the most successful works of art in living memory had once been targets of censorship. Communist Russia banned the Koran (from 1926 to 1956). The Bible suffered the same fate in Saudi Arabia. Up till 1966, the Roman Catholic Church maintained an index of prohibited books (Index Librorum Prohibitorum).

Other classics that have been banned at one time or the other include *The Age of Reason* by Thomas Paine; D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Love*; James Joyce's *Ulysses*, Leo Tolstoy's *The Kingdom of God is within You*, Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*, Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*. In more contemporary times, authors that have been subjected to censorship include Salman Rushdie, Nawa el Saadawi, Ray Bradbury, Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe, J.K. Rowling, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Nuruddin Farah, Maya Angelou, Stephen King, Toni Morrison...Censorship could go in any direction and the reasons are varied. Voltaire's *Candide* and Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* were banned for obscenity, William Pierce's *The Turner Diaries* for racism, Paine's *The Age of Reason* and Nikos Kazantzakis' *The Last Temptation of Jesus Christ* for blasphemy, Peter Wright's *Spycatcher* (banned in the UK from 1985 -88) for revealing too many state secrets, Stephen Chbosky's *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* for promoting homosexuality. For insisting on the truth, many writers and intellectuals have had to pay dearly for this. Moliere (Jean-Baptiste Poquelin), 18th C French comic playwright was denied Christian burial by the Catholic Church. Peter Abelard, a French theologian was forced to burn his own books before he was locked up; Martin Luther's German translation of the Bible was ordered burned by the Papacy. Books by Thomas Hobbes suffered a similar fate at Oxford University in 1683. Books by Louis Braille, the founder of the Braille code were also burned. When books are targeted and creative work is demonised, it is the world's intellectual heritage that suffers. The growth of the dramatic form in

North Africa was truncated in part because of an ideological opposition to fictive representations. Shehu Sani's *The Phantom Crescent* should not be burnt or banned. The Sharia court should not order that his hands should be amputated, the fate suffered by Jangedi in actuality and in the play. But how far should writers go in exercising their right to free speech? Sani has been accused of mischief. The title of his play is said to be offensive. Perhaps it is. He has also been accused of trying to stage a provocative play in the month of Ramadan. Is there any best time for art? And is there a connection between art and responsibility? *The Anarchist Cookbook* by William Powell was banned in the United States because it contained recipes for making explosives. An essay *Suicide mode d'emploi* by Claude Guillon was banned for describing various ways to commit suicide.

=====xxxx

DOCUMENT 2:

THE PUNCH OCTOBER 13 2007

Why there's a fuss over my book –Shehu Sani

By Segun Olatunji
Saturday, 13 Oct 2007 An Interview.

What is the fuss over your book all about?

Civil rights activist, Mallam Shehu Sani:

First of all, this book is a 52-page play. It was intended to be staged in an open theatre at the park popularly known as Gamji Gate, here in Kaduna. The play is simply aimed at sensitising the citizenry, particularly Nigerians who live in the states that operate the Sharia law system. The objective is to educate and enlighten the citizenry on how they can defend and protect their fundamental human rights as guaranteed by the Nigerian constitution and all conventions to which this country is a signatory. The play that was aborted was also intended to send a message to some of the northern governors that are implementing Sharia in their states. It is a reality in this part of the country that the political class, in collaboration with clerics and traditional rulers, has continued to manipulate religion for its narrow gains. They have continued to use religion to dominate and oppress the people, and to protect and preserve their class and socio-economic interests. As a people living in a democracy and as the pillars of the struggle for democracy in Nigeria, I felt that there should be the use of this medium to educate and enlighten the citizenry. We believe that for the past eight years since the introduction or launching of the Sharia legal code in the northern states,

all the promises that have been made by the politicians have not come to pass. They advertised the code as the solution to all the socio-economic problems that have bedevilled this part of the country, but eight years after, there has been no change. We have seen a systematic and institutional looting of the treasury of the states by governors who had paraded themselves as Sharia-compliant. We have seen the application of double standards on the sides of these governors. We've seen the clear cases of human rights abuses perpetrated by the so-called Hisbah, the Sharia enforcement police. They have become an instrument of repression in the hands of governors who operate Sharia in their states. We have seen cases whereby the opposition in those states was muzzled, on the grounds that any act of opposition to government policies within the state is a sacrilege or a confrontation against the Islamic religion. We have seen cases whereby labour activists themselves were muzzled and people with divergent political opinions were harassed and intimidated; and everyone is supposed to be silent because, as they say, religion is a very sensitive issue. What playwrights, authors and human rights activists like me believe is that it should not be so, and we thought that with a play like this, people can better be sensitised. This play, which I have called "The Phantom Crescent," is not the first one I have written. I have written a number of books that touch on diverse subjects, but those who are now confronting us saw this particular one as a serious threat to them and they went to court and got an injunction to stop us. I wrote the book, published it and circulated invitations for the play to be staged but I got a court order that it cannot go on.

Which court?

An Upper Sharia Court in Tundun Wada gave a specific instruction that the play should be stopped from being staged, and that my book should not be circulated or sold by either myself or any person who is acting in proxy. Now, we went to court yesterday (Tuesday) and there was argument between our legal counsel and theirs on the grounds that, how could they ban the book when they have not even heard our own side of the story? But the Sharia court judge insisted that the book should remain banned and the matter adjourned till October 15.

\
Why do you think this is an auspicious time for you to launch such a book and stage the play?

Well, as far as the issue of conscientisation is concerned, you can do this at any time. Particularly, we are concerned that of recent, there has been a serious institutionalised and broad campaign against artistes and authors in the northern part of Nigeria. With the unfortunate release of a pornographic film by an actress in Kano, there has been a serious campaign and persecution against actors, entertainers and others. Right now, one of the actors, Adamu Sango, is in jail for singing and dancing in a DVD which he is accused of selling to the public. When we sent our legal counsel there, he (Sango) informed us that he recorded the film in Lagos, but the marketers brought it to Kano. He made that submission only, yet he was jailed for one year. So we have to understand that we are in a democracy, and that only the people can be the guardians of democracy. If people like us do not speak out using all the media of communication, the hope of this country is lost. In this part of the country, religion has become a very big business for politicians because it first of all protects them from being held accountable and responsible for their actions; in the sense that they also present themselves as spiritual leaders, rather than see themselves as politicians who have been given the mandate to serve the people. Religion is also used in this part of the country to neutralise resistance by indoctrinating the people with the ideology of fatalism. Religion also is seriously being used to ensure that the oppressed continue to accept their plight and their situation as it is. Religious clerics in other parts of the world have been playing a progressive role in terms of fighting for democracy and justice for their people. We can see how the Buddhist monks in Myanmar marched on the streets in defiance of the ruling dictators in that country. We have seen how even Islamic clerics in Pakistan went on the streets to challenge the injustice and the tyranny of the military regime there. The clerics from this part of the country are always pro-establishment. During military rule, when we were fighting for democracy, they were on the side of the military; and now they are on the side of whoever is in power. What we are simply saying is that the fundamental rights of the citizenry should be guaranteed, and that in no way must it be undermined under the guise of religion. This play was intended to be an open performance where people of all shades of opinion would form the audience. Now, what will happen is that if you stop this play, you are seriously attacking the right to freedom of expression. Their own position is that my play contains a lot of issues and points which they see as being too critical of the Sharia legal system, and that it is totally against the beliefs of the Islamic religion. One of them even said that I described the jihad of Othman Dan Fodio as a ruthless campaign of repression. I think they really need to go down and read that book and see that what I've said there is very clear: Sharia is being used to undermine the fundamental rights of citizens and we are not going to allow that. Secondly, Sharia is being used to protect corrupt politicians who are not held accountable on that ground. We are not going to allow that anymore. And the third point is that this system is biased against the poor. In the very state where a cattle

thief was amputated, the EFCC made startling revelations about how billions of naira and dollars have been looted. But these pro-establishment clerics have rationalised the thievery and the plunder of the resources belonging to the public. Their own interpretation of it is that corruption and looting of public funds are a breach of trust, while stealing is a crime. But for someone like me, I do not believe in that; and this message (book and play) is making a clear point that it is not only the ordinary people that are being persecuted but even Islamic religious leaders who belong to different schools of thought on issues like this. They themselves are being harassed and ostracised. And now we have to do something by either making your views known through advertising in newspapers, or staging a drama like we intended to do through this form of sensitisation that they are afraid of.

Your case seems faintly similar to that of fugitive British author, Salman Rushdie. Don't you fear for your life?

For now, what I've said in my book is that Sharia law, as applied by the northern governors, is undermining the rights and freedom of the citizenry and is also a threat to their constitutional rights, and that the citizenry owe it a duty or an obligation to stand up and defend their fundamental human rights. My case is not the same thing with that of Salman Rushdie, because as far as I'm concerned, what he raised in his own book is different from what is in my own book. I'm from the North, I'm a Muslim and I live in a state that also practices Sharia. I'm saying that conditions and policies that are being applied by governments in the North are not in consonance with the constitution of the country. All I'm saying is that politicians should stop exploiting religion, should stop misinforming people and manipulating religion for their personal and selfish gains. That is all.

Don't you feel that some of these politicians may instigate the youths against you?

Well, we have been going through that for a number of years. During military rule, our fears had always been about what the government could do against us. And under civil rule, anybody can plan anything sinister; but one thing is that if you are going to die, die for your beliefs, die for your opinion and die fighting for an ideal. We are not going to relent on the campaign that people must learn to respect the constitution of Nigeria and the fundamental human rights of the citizens. Just two weeks ago in Zamfara State, okada riders staged a protest during which they stormed the office of the Sharia Commission and chased away the officials, on the ground that they were denied the right to carry women, who are their major customers. They said that this had been impacting negatively on their business, while the women too have been suffering because the alternative means of transportation provided for them is not adequate. So, this was a spontaneous action by a people who are also Muslims. Even in Islam, there are different schools of thought. So, what we are saying is that we have a superior argument from our own side. And we are not saying it from the point of view of any other religion, we are talking from the Islamic point of view. A society that is decadent, oppressive and that has been unable to provide the socio-economic needs of the people cannot impose on them prohibitive laws. The government, whether state or local council, must live up to their responsibilities – provide the basic needs of the people, cater for people's welfare, and it is then you can also hold the people accountable because the law is a cycle. The government has the half, while the people have the other half. What we are saying generally is that any politician or cleric who feels threatened by what we can do or what we are doing is free to exercise his fundamental human rights. But for people like us, we are never afraid to express our opinion. I spent over four years in prison during the military regime; and if you can pass through all these and come out, then you can't be afraid to express your opinion. I'm a writer and I express my views and messages in my writings, and this drama is one of such.

Are you not afraid of being tagged anti-Islam?

They have already tagged me so for a very long time and it's not a new thing. When Sharia was introduced in 2000, I rose and spoke. I was attacked, some of them went to the mosques to threaten and curse me. Unfortunately, anybody who knows Shehu Sani should know that I can't be threatened or pulled back from what I feel is right and just for our society. It's even now, eight years after, that many of them, especially the Muslims, have come to realise that it's all deception and it was even unfortunate for people from other religions to have confronted and fought the Muslims over the introduction of Sharia. They should have kept quiet and allow the Muslims confront the politicians. When it was introduced, a lot of propaganda was associated with it such that any contrary opinion was treated as blasphemy. But now in most of the states, they have seen how the promoters of Sharia have become stupendously rich overnight, how double standards have been applied. The villages that had no pipe-borne water, electricity and good roads before the Sharia have remained the same eight years after. They now see how their money is being carted away through the sponsorship of clerics to the holy land to pray for the governors. They have

seen how under the guise of religion, money was diverted to simply feather the nests of some few people. So, what we are saying generally is that the people have by themselves and by our own agitation come to know the truth. We have been told by people that they never knew that the whole thing was a deception. If you are in a PDP or ANPP state that is practising Sharia, you are most likely to be persecuted, ostracised and silenced; and in the event of any attempt by you to portray yourself as a legitimate opposition that abides by the constitution, you'll simply be seen as anti-Sharia. By tagging you as such, you'll be silenced. We have seen cases whereby when the EFCC raised an alarm on the looting of the treasury by one of the governors in a Sharia state, the clerics tried to misinform the public by castigating the EFCC as anti-Sharia; and that the allegations were simply meant to undermine Sharia. This is how it serves them, and I'm not surprised that they are criticising and attacking us. They are simply telling us that their privileges, their powers are simply being eroded by this kind of literary work.

What becomes of the book and the play, given the stance of the Upper Sharia Court on the matter?

We are law-abiding citizens, and since the Sharia Court has granted an injunction against the play and the book, we'll not stage the play. But we have sent our own lawyers to the court and they are going to argue it out. There are a lot of channels we'll follow. If the Sharia court order stands that we cannot stage the play, we'll go to the higher court and challenge the ruling. If the higher court affirms that the play cannot go on, we'll go to the Court of Appeal and from there we'll prepare to go to the Supreme Court. We'll pursue this thing to the last; because if we allow this thing to happen, all other persons with different views and ideas, who want to express their opinion against what we see on the ground, will be silenced by this kind of action.

=====XXXX

DOCUMENT 3:

DAILY TRUST OCTOBER 15 2007

Nigeria: Northern Christians Condemn Shehu Sani's Book
Sani Babadoko, Kaduna

A group, Concerned Northern Christians (CNC), have dissociated itself from a publication by Shehu Sani, which is critical of the Islamic reformer, Shehu Usman Danfodio and the introduction of Sharia in the northern states.

Briefing reporters yesterday in Kaduna after an Upper Sharia Court banned the circulation of the book: "Phantom Crescent," was the spokesperson of the group, a former Senior Special Adviser (Religious Affairs) to Governor Ahmed Sani of Zamfara state, Mr. Yunana Shibkai. He said the book is a grand design by some foreign powers using Nigerians like Shehu Sani, to ignite another bout of religious crisis in the north.

"It is the work of the opposition to which Shehu Sani is one, to destabilise the north and the federal government by hiding behind a dubious authorship to instigate Muslims against Christians and we are strongly opposed to it.

"We Christians in the northern states have high regard and respect for the works and teachings of Shehu Usman Danfodio and his contributions to the socio-political and economic development of the region.

Shibkai, a Christian from Zamfara state, said Christians were only fighting for justice and freedom when they first expressed apprehension over the introduction of Sharia, which they agree, was a divinely prescribed way of life for every Muslim which is allowed by the country's constitution.

"We Christians in the north are dissociating ourselves from this mischievous publication and call on the Upper Sharia Court in Kaduna to ban the book in the interest of religious harmony in the country. We strongly condemn the book and Shehu Sani should be held responsible for whatever happens because of publishing the book.

Alhaji Abdullahi Mohammed of Sabon Layi, Tudun Wada, Zaria had last year lodged a complaint at the Upper Area Court in Kaduna with a ten-point affidavit that the author was critical of the 19th century Islamic reformer, Shehu Usman Danfodio and castigated the application of Sharia law in northern Nigeria.

Mohammed stated that Sani in his book also questioned the motive behind the enforcement of Sharia law, which he said was an instrument to enslave the masses.

According to the affidavit, the author castigated the Jihad of Othman Danfodio and described it as ruthless and a war crime whose aim was to impose emirs as rulers.

"The author claimed that Danfodio's jihad gave Sultan and the emirs in Northern Nigeria a false religious root and justification for existence," Mohammed said.

He told the court that Shehu Sani castigated the introduction of Sharia in Zamfara and Kaduna states which he (the author) described as "something that heralded a spiral of new kind of politics of blackmail and

=====XXXX

DOCUMENT 4:

DAILY TRUST OCTOBER 13 2007

Nigeria: Shari'ah Court Upholds Ban On Shehu Sani's Book

Odoh Diego Okenyodo and Abdulraheem Aodu, Kaduna

An Upper Shari'ah Court in Tudun Wada, Kaduna, last Tuesday upheld an order restraining civil rights activist Malam Shehu Sani from staging a play from his new book titled *The Phantom Crescent*. This was the outcome of suit brought before the court by Members of Concerned Shari'ah Forum, a Kaduna-based group.

Aside from stopping the drama on Northern governors' Shari'ah practice the suit stopped the leader of the Socialist Front (SF) and Northern Civil Rights Society Coalition (NCRSC) from circulating the 52-page book.

The Plaintiff, and leader of Members of Concerned Shari'ah Forum (MCSF), Alhaji Abdullahi Mohammed, in a motion *ex parte*, had urged the Upper Shari'ah Court to issue an order restraining Malam Sani, "himself, servant, agents or privies from, selling or in any way circulating the book titled, 'The Phantom Crescent'."

The plaintiff also asked the court to issue "other orders as this honourable court may deem fit in the circumstances to prevent the defendant from circulating the book or staging a play on the practice of Shari'ah in the Northern states."

On October 9, 2007 during the hearing on the suit with number C/No/USC/TW/KD356/2007 Shehu Sani's lawyer Barrister Mohammed Sanusi argued that no claims were made by the plaintiff and that the motion on notice was not served on his client. Sanusi also argued that his client did not receive fair hearing since no evidence was brought before the court, neither did the Shari'ah court judge, Alkali Mustapha Umar, read the book before acceding to the motion restraining the author from selling his publication. He also contended that the author acted in accordance with the right to free speech which is guaranteed by the Constitution and prayed the court to lift the order. Ruling on the matter is slated for Monday, 15th October.

Relevant Links

West Africa
Arts, Culture and Entertainment
Books
Legal and Judicial Affairs
Nigeria

Religion

Sani had sent letters of invitation to the public for the drama planned to be staged at the Gamji Gate on October 13 2007 before receiving the Shari'ah court summon asking him to stay action. The content of the play, specifically talks about the intrigues and politics involved in the implementation of Shari'ah law, while exposing the inadequacies of the public officers in the Northern states where the legal code is practised and how they "used Shari'ah for their political advantages."

The work of fiction is based on the circumstances surrounding implementation of Shari'ah in an unnamed state by the lead character known as Governor Yerima and social imbalance that followed it. Governor Yerima is portrayed in some scene selectively approving amputation and stoning to death for Buba Jangebe and Safiya, respectively, while sparing Bala Dainna, deputy chairman of the governor's party.

There is a revolt led by Aminu, leader of the Redemption Front, who tells his excited followers: "They said it is against Shari'ah to take alcohol, while most of them take it. They said it is against Shari'ah to patronise prostitutes while most of them do it. They said it is illegal to engage in gambling while most of them do it. They said we cannot listen to music or dance, while most of them do. Today is the end of their hypocrisy."

=====XXXX

DOCUMENT 5:

Forum Sues Sani Over Sharia Book

From: Saxone Akhaine, Kaduna GUARDIAN 7 Oct 2007

Leader of the Socialist Front (SF) and Northern Civil Rights Society Coalition, Malam Shehu Sani has been sued at the Upper Sharia Court, Tudun Wada, Kaduna for attempting to circulate a 52-page book and stage a Sharia drama play on alleged deceit by Northern Governors in the implementation of Sharia legal code.

The leader of Concerned Sharia Forum, Alhaji Abdullahi Mohammed (the plaintiff in the suit), in a motion exparte, urged the Upper Sharia Court to issue an order restraining Malam Sani, "either himself, servant, agents or privies from selling or in any way circulating the book titled, 'The Phantom Crescent.'"

Besides, the plaintiff also asked the court to issue "other orders as this honourable court may deem fit in the circumstances to prevent the defendant from circulating the book or staging a play on the practice of sharia in the Northern states."

The drama book written by Sani is all about the intrigues and politics in the implementation of Sharia law, and it exposed how public officers in the northern states "used sharia for their political advantage."

Briefing journalists yesterday on the suit: nos C/No/USC/TW/KD356/2007 filed against him and which is to come up for hearing on October 9, Malam Sani said that "we sent invitation letters to Nigerians, and for the play to be staged at Gamji Gate on October 23, 2007 ... only for us to receive a Sharia court summons and exparte motion wanting to stop us in elightening Nigerians.

"The invitation letters were circulated to individuals and groups representatives from all over the country, believing that by stage performance we would be able to sensitize and enlighten the public better about the deception of governors in Sharia states and their hatchet men.

"Since they have gone to the sharia court to challenge us, we are going to the court too to argue our case. And if the court rules in their favour, we are going to appeal," he said.

=====XXXX

DOCUMENT 6:

Links to additional materials:

[Nigerian Islamic court bans satirical play on Sharia law - Yahoo Daily News](#)

20 minutes ago KANO, [Nigeria](#) (AFP) - An [Islamic court](#) in northern Nigeria has banned a play written by a [civil rights](#) activist which satirises the implementation of Sharia law in 12 mainly Muslim states, court...

[Kaduna Sharia Court Bans Book All Africa](#)

An Upper Sharia [Court](#) in Tudun...

[Nigerian sued over play News24](#)

Abuja - A [Nigerian human rights](#) activist is being sued in an [Islamic court](#) over a play he wrote exposing what he calls abuses and double standards by those implementing sharia law in 12 northern Nigerian...

[Nigerian Sharia court bans play BBC News](#)

An [Islamic court](#) in [Nigeria](#) has banned a satirical play written by a rights activist about corrupt politicians in states run under Sharia law. Shehu Sani's play Phantom Crescent lampoons officials who use...

=====XXXX

DOCUMENT 7:

How to stem political, religious violence, by Akunyili, Sani

From Mohammed Abubakar, Abuja GUARDIAN April 3 2007 (or 4 March?)

GROWING cases of political and religious violence in the country have been attributed to poverty and youth unemployment.

To check the tide, the Director-General of National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), Prof. Dora Akunyili, has called for the economic empowerment of the youths.

She also appealed to the youths to resist being used to foment trouble by dubious politicians.

At the public presentation of two books written by a human and civil rights activist, Malam Shehu Sani, at the Transcorp Hotel in Abuja at the weekend, Akunyili said the advice had become necessary, given the involvement of youths in politically-related violence.

The two books: "The Killing Fields and Political Assassinations in Nigeria", according to Sani, were his attempts at presenting the systemic failure of the country to provide and guarantee the safety and security of its citizens and also offer suggestions on how to move the nation forward.

While the first book mirrored the senseless religious-inclined killings in the northern part of the country since the 1970s, the second attempted cases of assassinations.

Akunyili, who was one of the special guests at the occasion, lamented that the youths, who should be the future leaders, had unfortunately been the object of crisis by the ruling elite, thereby destroying their future. According to her, religious violence was a symptom of the crisis of underdevelopment since most of the people involved were unemployed persons.

Her words: "Religious violence is caused by ignorance, but we all worship the same God, irrespective of our religious affiliations, because if God had wanted all human beings to be in the same religion, He has the capacity to do so.

"Some people are religious without being godly and religion without godliness is a very dangerous trend. No religion preaches violence. Don't kill in the name of religion, people should check their consciences. Religion is not the issue; people should be honest about it. The real issue is economic. They are looking for the way out", she said. In his remarks, Sani said he was spurred to write the books having watched events on both political and religious scenes, which had led to the loss of many Nigerians, a development, he said, was a demonstration of the failure of the leaders since the country's independence.

=====~~XXXX~~

DOCUMENT 8:

Jan H. Boer

Northern Christians Opposed to "The Phantom Crescent"

xxxx

In Appendix 6, under the heading "Education," I gave you a summary report on the drama surrounding the play "The Phantom Crescent" written by Muslim human rights activist Shehu Sani. Here we have an unusual case of indigenous core Northern Christians supporting the Muslim community in their defence against accusations by a fellow Muslim. Christians usually approve of Muslim human rights workers, but in this case there was a significant exception. A group calling itself "Concerned Northern Christians" disassociated itself from the play and supported the ban for a number of reasons. They disliked Sani's denouncing the Muslim icon Usman Danfodio, for whom they expressed "high regard and respect." Yes, these Christians initially opposed the expanded sharia, but that was because they "were only fighting for justice and freedom," while they agreed that sharia "was a divinely prescribed way of life for every Muslim which is allowed by the Constitution." The group's spokesman, Mr. Yunana Shibkai, a former Senior Special Adviser (Religious Affairs) to former Governor [now Senator] Sani, described the play as "a grand design by some foreign powers using Nigerians like Shehu Sani to ignite another bout of religious crisis in the North." It represented an attempt "to destabilise the North and the FG by hiding behind a dubious authority to instigate Muslims against Christians and we are strongly opposed to it."

These were unusual sounds for Christians and they lead directly to the question of identity. Who were these "Concerned Northern Christians"? Whom did they represent? "We Christians in the Northern states"—the self-identification used by Shibkai-- is a pretty wide designation that normally would surely include CAN. I have never heard of them before and find it difficult to interpret their statement. This statement was so contrary to main stream

Christian thought. This is an another example of the different attitude and approach of core Northern indigenous Christians that has occasionally led to friction between them and CAN.¹ Opponents of sharia often accuse its advocates of trying to destabilise the country. Now an opponent is accused of the same by Christians! And that by indigenous core Northern Christians who are reportedly so oppressed by sharia folk! Go figure! I confess to being la bit lost. One explanation could be Shibkau's position as advisor to Governor Sani. This could represent a case of manipulation and betrayal by a "Christian" government official.

¹S. Babadoko, 15 Oct/2007. J. Boer, 2008, vol. 7, p. 178. Turn to Appendix 14 xxxx to locate the entire article.