

Kalu and Enahoro—yes to sharia Find them below

Prof. Lamin Sanneh in private discussion on June 19, 2000:
 Zamfara Govt received N500 million from abroad to implement shari'a.

NaijaNews Nube Achebo July 14, 2000
 Lagos Recalls Indigenes

Lagos State yesterday swelled the ranks of states whose graduate indigenes have been directed to shun posting to the northern states implementing Sharia code. The recall of the prospective corps members announced by the Lagos House of Assembly during the first sitting of the second legislative session, came on the heels of similar decision by Ogun, Ondo, Ekiti and Ebonyi States. -National Concord

Only 800 Corpers Registered in Zamfara -NYSC Director
 This Day (Lagos)
 July 14, 2000

Why Atiku Spoke on Sharia
 This Day (Lagos)
 July 14, 2000
 By Femi Akorede

Lagos - There are indications that Vice President Atiku Abubakar's recent pronouncement in Sokoto that the Sharia legal code was the wish of the people may have been part of a plan by the leading lights of the Obasanjo administration to retake the high ground and moderate the Sharia controversy so far run by radical mullahs and Islamic extremists in the north.

Abubakar had said in Sokoto last weekend that the governors who have so far launched the Sharia were implementing the wish of the people. Four

states, Sokoto, Niger, Zamfara and Kano have so far launched the Islamic legal system while Bauchi Jigawa and Katsina are preparing their own Sharia launches.

Senior Presidency sources said last night that the Vice President's statement was the first in the strategy by leading lights of the Obasanjo administration, especially those of northern extraction, to seize the initiative in the Sharia controversy by making some concessions that would see the states currently implementing Sharia getting as close to the penal code as possible.

Atiku's Sokoto statement was designed to influence the process of Sharia law before it goes to the extreme. The high ranking administration figures are said to be worried about the role of the Islamic Ulama and Muslim radicals, some said to be egged-on by Libya in influencing the introduction of Sharia in the four states and concluded that the government must find ways of nipping the controversy in the bud before it consumes the nation.

Their strategy is said to be predicated on giving Moslems what they want without endangering the life and livelihood of Christians, destabilising or playing into the hands of foreign interests like Libya and Iran.

The group is said to have been alarmed by the sweeping spread of the Sharia fever in the north, especially the mammoth crowd that witnessed the launch of the Islamic legal code in Kano. It is also worried that if the continued influence of the mullahs and extremists in the Sharia controversy was not checked, it would blossom into a dangerous storm that would sweep away the northern elite including those in government who would end up with no influence in the law or its making and therefore out of the loop.

According to sources, Atiku's group concluded that radicals have so far dictated the pace of the Sharia and have brought immense pressure on several governors that were initially reluctant to implement the Islamic law which is seen as incumbent on all Muslims.

The major plank of the groups argument is that states seeking to implement the criminal aspects of the Sharia must first put in place a welfarist state as prescribed in the Holy Quran before embarking on such policies. Said the source: 'Before you cut somebody's hand, you must first put in place a society that makes it near impossible for somebody to steal.... Right now, we don't have that in place. So implementing criminal aspects of Sharia should not have arisen'

Since last year when the Zamafara State government launched the Sharia, the Islamic legal code has become highly controversial with opponents and supporters maintaining rigid stand on the issue. Last February the controversy over what appeared to be the imminent introduction of Sharia in Kaduna State snowballed into a bloody clash between Muslims and Christians which left hundreds of people dead and property worth millions of naira destroyed. The National Council of State thereafter resolved that states, which had so far implemented the Sharia, should return to the status quo ante. the governors however insisted that the council of states' resolution was merely advisory and was not binding on them.

The Patriots, a pressure group comprising elder statesmen from the South and led by respected lawyer, Chief Rotimi Williams, (SAN) said early in the week that the Sharia was illegal and unconstitutional and called on the Federal Government to stop further allocation of proceeds from oil and VAT to Sharia states.

Lagos - The campaign by the southern states to have graduates of Southern origin posted to states other than those practicing Sharia, appears to have taken its toll on the exercise as only 800 corps members registered at the close of registration by 12 midnight on Wednesday, in Zamfara State. Similarly, this year's camping exercise for corps members has been shifted to August 7.

The Director of the NYSC in the state, Mr. Henry Ofoegbu who disclosed this during the swearing-in ceremony of the 1999/2000 first tier corps members deployed to Zamfara state yesterday in Tsafe town, Zamfara state, said the corps members had already adjusted their lives to suit their new environment.

Ofoegbu assured the corps members that the atmosphere was still calm and conducive as it used to be before the introduction of Sharia, adding that "the youths do not have anything to fear".

He observed that the stories that the corps members had heard about the state were not true, adding that by the time they settled down, they would see things for themselves.

The director advised them not to bother themselves about re deployment.

Speaking at the ceremony, the governor, Alhaji Ahmed Sani, assured the corps members of their safety and economic well-being irrespective of their ethnic and religious background. He commended the youths for

dismissing and shunning the rumours and misinformation that trailed their posting to various parts of the country including Zamfara State.

The governor, however, appealed to them to shun alcoholism, gambling, prostitution and corrupt practices as they are against the Sharia.

Meanwhile, the headquarters of the National Youths Service Corps (NYSC) has announced an extension of the reporting date for corps members expected to participate in the first batch of the 2000/2001 service year from July 17 to Aug. 7.

The announcement was made yesterday in Abuja at the end of a meeting between some members of the House of Representatives led by the Deputy Leader, Chief Mao Oluabunwa and officials of the directorate.

Addressing hundreds of prospective corps members at the NYSC headquarters after the meeting, Oluabunwa said that call-up letters would be produced between yesterday and today for immediate distribution to the affected graduates through their respective universities.

He said that money had also been made available to the NYSC for the distribution of letters to the universities.

The Deputy Leader further said that the House would also send delegations to all NYSC orientation camps in the country to ensure that corps members who reported late were not victimised or denied registration.

 Sharia and Democracy
 This Day (Lagos)
 July 14, 2000
 By Wonuola Martins

Lagos - Perhaps, on hindsight, it was only a matter of time. With the capitulation on June 21, of Kano State to the compelling forces of Sharia, the sharialisation of Northern Nigeria is a foregone conclusion.

Even as the durbar state launched the controversial Islamic legal code, other states were setting in motion, machinery to do same. And, despite entreaties by the confounded Obasanjo presidency to the "recalcitrant" states to revert to the penal code of old, events on ground indicate that the presidency is fighting a lost cause.

When the bearded governor of Zamfara State dragged Sharia into national

consciousness, little attention was paid to the explosiveness of the Islamic legal system. The move was interpreted as a gimmick conceived by disgruntled Northern elements unhappy with the focus or administration of the Obasanjo government. It was reasoned that Sharia was to be a bargaining chip which, in anticipated horse-trading, would strengthen the hand of its players. This line of thought was based on the premise of the introduction of Sharia, at a point when a southerner was president, rather than during the tenures of previous northern-run governments. The Muslim governors argued otherwise; that Sharia was borne out of the fervent desire of the people. Moreover, the crowds, fanfare and celebration that have graced the Sharia launches vindicate them. Today, it is not a question of the sinister or genuine motivation for the implementation of the legal system; that now lies irrelevant. Rather, the reality of the matter is that Sharia has transcended the alleged dubious gimmickry of frustrated Northern politicians to become a unifying call- a must have- among the faithful of the North.

In the same manner of volatile issues that have transfixed Nigeria-- rulership of this great nation, the agitation for self- determination by minorities, and revenue distribution among others, Sharia has shoved in the face of Nigeria the realisation that there are more things that divide than unite us. That national issues would be viewed from the perspective of North Vs South; us against them. Since pre-independence, there has been an entrenched tradition of attaching suspicion to anything emanating from the other by either of the two blocs. In all probability, it remains inconceivable that southerners would judge this agitation for Sharia as genuine by a people they have grown to distrust. This perception holds, regardless of the substantiality that Sharia has been a troubling recurring decimal in the history of this country. In 1979 Obasanjo regime had to declare it off limits during its constitutional drafting conference when Sharia then, as at now, threatened to tear the country apart. Again, in 1991, the Babangida government replicated the same measure. Likewise, in the late Abacha's 1995 constitutional drafting conference. In addition, as recently as last year, there was uproar over alleged attempts by the Abdulsalami administration to "smuggle" Sharia into the present constitution.

In fairness to Northern governors, most had been unreceptive to the introduction of the Islamic code. The governor of Kaduna State had, at a point, when the nation was debating the legality of the then just sharialised Zamfara state, declared its implementation unconstitutional. Other governors had been noticeably cold to its introduction or, at best, lukewarm. All that was to change from the moment Zamfara State launched the legal code, and, in the face of public groundswell for Sharia, spurred and sustained by the powerful ulammas, the buckling of the No.1 citizens was inevitable.

Neither did the unambiguous endorsement of Sharia by no lesser than two former heads of state lessen the pressure on them. To act otherwise would have been politically naive and suicidal. And, as for the populace, what the arduous years of military rule had stifled had been won at the altar of democracy, which, the governors were only too quick to label as culprit; that Sharia being the agitation of the people had to be implemented. As the even larger multitude that attended the Sharia launch in Kano testifies, the implementation of the Islamic code has the blessing of the masses. And why should anyone begrudge them this desire? Muslims are right in their desire to have a legal system that identifies with their lives, culture, and religion.

Nevertheless, overshadowed by the euphoria, one neglected- and largely misunderstood-issue comes to fore: the impact of Sharia on the lives of non-Muslims, its impact on their rights, and more importantly, its place in a multi-religious nation. There have been justifiable fears by both resident and native non-muslims over the Islamic legal code. Fears that to the Sharia enthusiasts are unfounded. They have stressed repeatedly, that the code would be binding solely on Muslims. That in the eventuality of any dispute between members of both faiths, the Christian would be at liberty to seek redress under the cannon law. They even predict that non-Muslims would come to prefer the Islamic court as judgements pronounced by it would, unquestioningly and instantly, be binding on the faithful.

They further explain that, in the face of declining social values, a law of zero tolerance- as the sharia is- is essential in preserving and upholding the society from the corruptive influences of this age. Reasonable arguments, you might say. Moreover, alcohol which is forbidden under the holy law, is, they are quick to point out, also prohibited in the Christian faith. To them, Sharia would prove to be as much help in Christian life as muslims. And, the icing on the cake? The novel social and financial benefits from schemes as: interest free loans, stability and guaranteed low prices of goods and services, not to mention the pegging of excessive profits of the ubiquitous market women. Therefore, it is perhaps not surprising, if one perceives a sense of exasperation on the part of Sharia enthusiasts in the face of non-Muslim opposition, or almost hears the silent accusations of hypocrisy.

If Sharia were to have its desired effect solely on the muslim population, there wouldn't be a problem. However, to the Christian and animist, the implementation of Sharia goes beyond the purported elimination of social vices and banning of alcohol. What is at stake is power. The power to determine and dictate, the objective of live of a

society. To the indigenous Christians of the Northern states, Sharia remains a ploy to further subjugate them to perpetual slavery, to relegate them to the background in political affairs. This tells why Sharia remains an explosive issue in cosmopolitan Kaduna and Kano states, particularly the former where, so far, there have been two bloody religious clashes, regardless of government propaganda on the last clash.

Living in the Shariatised north, a non-Muslim, particularly a female, would be required to dress in a certain way, regardless of her religious or social beliefs. A male Christian or non-muslim would not be forbidden to enter or mix in a public place with his mother, wife, sister, girlfriend, whatever. The propagator of any other religious ideology would be sure to experience harassment and intimidation despite denials of Sharia apologists, assuring of freedom of worship. However, with the fore-knowledge of the high illiteracy level in the North, it would be a very, very brave and stupid man that would dare the wrath of Muslim youths. Furthermore, social and financial ventures would be subjected to the scrutiny of the legal code, which certainly can't be accused of liberalism in such matters. The very essence of life tailor-made to the demands of the Sharia

Democracy is the most popular system of government in the world today, not only because of relentless avocation of it by western nations, but because, it still remains the only system of government in which its citizens take solace in its principles which, incidentally, Sharia negates. Operating Sharia under the constitution amounts to mixing oil with water. The mosque and state don't mix and never will. In a democracy, as in most forms of government, there exists a line separating the state from the church. This, in a way, might explain why the concept of governments evolved as a whole and why almost no nation is subject to any divine law. There exists, something inherent, in the nature of man that rebels against the restrictions of any ecclesiastical law. Examples abound: Adam and Eve; the clamour of the biblical Israelites for a monarchy against that of the almighty; the judges; the recent electoral victories by moderates in Iran over the ultra-conservative mullahs. Besides, it is instructive to note that Indonesia, a nation with the largest muslim population in the world clings to its secularity, likewise India whose teeming Hindu population provides no excuse for a Hindu state despite a Hindu nationalist party in power.

The implementation of Sharia only gives voice to the national conference agitators, concept this government has rejected in its entirety. But now they surely must be coming round to the realisation that the diverse tribes in Nigeria need to discuss the future of this

federation. And whether that takes place in the national assembly or in the form of a seminar or workshop is immaterial. There is need for a jaw-jaw to define the terms of this federation, to clear the webs of mutual suspicion and distrust.

* Martins is a Computer Staff, THISDAY Newspapers

=====

Nuhu Achebi NaijaNews Vanguard News July 5/2000

CAN urges NYSC not to post Southern Christian corp members to Northern states

By Sina Babasola

IBADAN - CHRISTIAN Association of Nigeria (CAN), Oyo State branch yesterday rose from an emergency meeting in Ibadan, urging the federal government to instruct the Director-General of the NYSC not to post any Christian graduate from the Southern parts of the country to any Northern states of Nigeria.

Besides, the association asked federal miniseries, institutions and parastatals to stop forthwith posting Christian civil servants, teachers and other categories of federal workers from the Eastern and Western parts of the country to the sharia states of Nigeria.

The president of the association, Bishop Ola Olu Akiode, at a news conference said: "We reviewed the issue of the introduction of sharia as a religious law binding on Muslims. They claim that sharia is about the ways of their life. We feel not bothered if Muslims claim that sharia is about their ways of life and that they want to be ruled by sharia. But we are emphasising that it is not Christians' ways of life. As such, Christians do not want and must not be ruled by sharia in any way and in any state of Nigeria. We reject it in its entirety."

Bishop Akiode further said: "As a matter of urgency, President Olusegun Obasanjo must instruct the National Director of the NYSC that on no account should any Christian graduate going on NYSC programme this year from the Southern, that is Western and Eastern states of the country, be posted to the Northern states."

Sharia: NYSC, states on war path over posting

By Ben Agande, Emma Amaize & Leon Usigbe

ABUJA - THE National Directorate of the National Youth Service Corps

(NYSC) insisted yesterday that prospective NYSC members would continue to be posted to any part of the country, regardless of agitation from certain quarters that Christians should not be posted to the Sharia states.

The Edo State House of Assembly yesterday passed a motion that indigenes of the state should not be posted to Sharia states while a group known as Middle Belt Patriots rising from a meeting in Kaduna also made a similar call.

The pan-Igbo socio-cultural group, Ohaneze had earlier asked prospective NYSC members from Igbo-speaking states to shun their posting to Sharia states.

But in an interview in Abuja yesterday, NYSC's deputy director of public relations, Mr. Anthony Okafor said NYSC remained bound by the law setting it up and therefore would continue to post members to any state of the federation other than their own.

He said: "The NYSC was set up by law (and) until the Federal Government which includes the National Assembly changes that law, we will continue to abide by its provisions.

"The law stipulates that corps members should be sent outside their home area in order to enhance national unity. If that law is changed, we will comply with the change but for now we are bound by the existing law," he said.

The deputy director, however, said the NYSC was not unmindful of the fears being raised by some groups and individuals on the security of their children and wards but added that the NYSC was taking the security of corps members very seriously.

The NYSC authorities at its annual meeting last April, he said resolved that states and local governments should pay greater attention to the safety and security of corps members.

"But beyond that," he continued, you know we have never been inhuman to corps members. People come to us for preferential treatment (in posting) based on health and other humanitarian reasons. We oblige them if we are convinced of their reasons."

IEdo Assembly passes motion

However, the Edo State House of Assembly yesterday passed a consequential motion asking the National Directorate of the National

Youth Service Corps (NYSC), Abuja not to post prospective corps members from the state to any state that has introduced the Sharia legal system or is attempting to do so.

It also resolved that where such prospective NYSC members of Edo origin has already been posted to Sharia states, the directorate should re-post them to non-Sharia states immediately.

The assemblymen said their resolution was in view of the fact that the governments and people of Sharia states could not guarantee the safety of Edo indigenes on national service in their midst.

The Speaker, Mr. Matthew Egbadon directed the Clerk of the House to send copies of the resolution to the NYSC, President Olusegun Obasanjo, Senate President, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Governor of the state, Chief Lucky Igbinedion and the Minister of Women Affairs.

A member of the assembly, Mr. Samson Osagie, representing Uhunnode Constituency raised the Sharia issue under matters of urgent public importance and was vehemently opposed by a Muslim member of the House, Mr. Abubakar Momoh before he was finally allowed to move his consequential motion.

Commenting on the Sharia/NYSC posting palaver before he moved the motion, Mr. Osagie said, "I feel strongly that prospective Edo State indigenes to the NYSC should be given some measure of protections by the directorate by posting them to areas where the government of this state can be rest assured that their safety is protected."

"Mr. Speaker, this morning, I want to bring it to the attention of this house the need for Edo State indigenes not to be posted to Sharia prone states because we know what is happening at the moment.

"We cannot sit here and allow our citizens to have their hands to be cut off while they are carrying on their national assignments in Sharia prone states," he said, adding that "the obvious consequences of the practice of Sharia is well known."

Mr. Thomas Okosun, representing Esan West who supported the call by Mr. Osagie said, "we are all aware that wearing of trousers negates Sharia law by women and female corps members when they go, the NYSC is not going to sew another uniform, and they will wear trousers."

"It therefore means ab initio, they have violated the provision of the Sharia law and so they might go to prison, they might have their hands amputated."

Pointing out that every Nigerian was free to practise his religion, he said that Sharia infringed on the fundamental human rights of others and the people of Edo State have every reason to entertain fear.

IMiddle Belt Patriots too

Similarly, the Middle Belt Patriots at a meeting in Kaduna called on parents of prospective corps members not to allow their wards to go to Sharia states for their service this year.

The group considered the "troubling issue" of graduates of the Middle Belt region and their participation in the NYSC scheme, saying after critical analysis of the state of the nation vis a vis the Sharia issue, the leadership of the Patriots are left with no other option but to call parents of graduates of the Middle Belt region to prevail on their wards not to agree to be posted to any Sharia state and Sharia prone states for this year's National Youths Service scheme.

"Such states for the avoidance of doubt are Zamfara, Niger, Sokoto, Kano, Jigawa, Bauchi, Yobe and Zaria, Igabi and Birni Gwari local government areas of Kaduna State."

IKaduna Assembly reverses ban on alcohol

However, the Kaduna State House of Assembly has declared that local government councils in the state which recently banned the sale and consumption of alcohol and prostitution had no right to do so.

It therefore advised them to revert to the status quo as only the state government under the provisions of the constitution could enact such laws.

The house's position was made known by the chairman of its judicial committee, Mr. Musa Shekaro, even as group of 22 Islamic organisations named the Muslim League for Accountability (MULAC) vowed that no amount of "threat, intimidation, distortion of facts and negative propaganda" would prevent Muslims from being governed according to Islamic dictates.

At a press conference in Kaduna yesterday, spokesperson for the group, Mallam Tahir Umar Tahir spoke of the desire of Muslims in Kaduna State to enter into dialogue with non-Muslims towards finding a way out of the present Sharia-induced crisis.

He said "Sharia is a preventive legal system which makes it difficult

for any diseased mind to commit indecencies or disrupt the social harmony of society.

"The basic objective of Sharia is to cater for the interests of the people, relieve them of hardship, promote their welfare, safeguard their faith, intellect, prosperity and their posterity," he said.

MULAC blamed the crisis on the Southern Kaduna Peoples Union (SOKAPU) which it said "with neither honour nor investment to protect, are always eager to seize the slightest opportunity to create chaos so that they can kill, maim and loot."

The MULCA spokesman added: "It is a pity that the SOKAPU adherents suffer from serious self-inflicted inferiority complex in spite of their domination of the civil service and the security forces.

"This malaise beclouds their sense of reason to the extent that they imagine that they are marginalised.

"To correct their perceived marginalisation, they are demanding that injustice must be done by denying others their rights," MULCA asserted.

=====

Volume 31 N0 26, July 3, 2000
Nubi Ochebo NaijaNews Newswatch

Sharia Fire Rages on

Tension heightens in Kano and Kaduna over the implementation of Sharia legal systems in the two states

By Tunde Asaju

Kano and Kaduna States in the north-western part of Nigeria are under high tension over the implementation of Sharia legal system. In Kaduna, the hotbed of two ethno-religious crisis this year, the submission of a committee report on the viability of Sharia sparked off a renewed spate of controversy and tension. There are fears that the state would boil again.

In neighbouring Kano State, Governor Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso, signed into law, the Sharia bill making its full application effective in Muslim-dominated areas of the state. His officials have held series of meetings with Christian leaders and non-indigenes assuring them that their lives and business ventures would not be unnecessarily tampered with by the law.

Nonetheless, there were fears that a riot might break out as a result of the move. Reports said there were large stockpiles of local and modern ammunition by those who believe that the launching last Wednesday, June 21, would spark off a crisis.

Last week, many non-muslims and non-indigenes moved their families out of Kano metropolis on the fear that a riot might break out especially with the report that the Sharia law would extend to all military formations in the state. Military barracks remained the only safe place people run to during such riots.

But Felix Chukwuma, a colonel and director of army public relations, insisted that no state government can implement Sharia in any military barracks or military formation. He said it is only the president that can authorise such a thing.

To ensure that the situation did not lead to a breakdown of law and order, President Olusegun Obasanjo last Tuesday, despatched Tony Anenih, the works and housing minister to Kano to see Kwankwaso. After their meeting, Anenih said he was satisfied that there would be no problem. The governor also appealed to the muslim faithfuls to ensure that they did not cause any trouble.

The launching attracted a large crowd of muslims who went round the city chanting Islamic songs. In fact, the governor declared the day a public holiday to enable the muslims to take part in the launching.

In spite of the assurance of peace from Anenih and the governor, there was still heightened tension as christians and non-indigenes continued to feel unsafe under the situation.

The adoption of Sharia in Kano brings to three the number of northern states to have adopted the law. First to do so was Ahmed Sani of Zamfara State. Sokoto State joined the queue earlier this year. Niger State which has not declared full Sharia has banned the sale and consumption of alcohol in several parts of the state.

An attempt to smuggle the law into Kaduna State, resulted in two riots. Each had devastating effects on the state capital and left a permanent curfew in the city. Armed troops are guarding major public buildings and entrances to and out of the city.

Three weeks ago, tension escalated when the all-Muslim committee set up by the state house of assembly submitted its report. The 15-man committee said it received 133 oral presentations out of which only 13

were against the introduction of Sharia in the state. It also collated 267 written memoranda all but seven of which were against the implementation of the law. The committee tried not to say that the state is ripe for the law; instead it took a middle-of-the road approach.

The committee said that Sharia law is divine and obligatory on all Muslims and forms part of Section 38 of the 1999 constitution which gives freedom of thought, conscience and religion. They equally cited the inadequacy of the existing penal code in meeting various day-to-day dealings of Muslims. It, however, cautioned that Sharia should be restricted to Muslims only.

But the Christian Association of Nigeria, CAN, says it is opposed to Sharia because it limits the chances of evangelism. They said that one of the codes of Sharia law is the law of apostasy which negates the freedom of conversion. They also cited examples from Egypt and the Middle East to show that Sharia may be applied to non-Muslims thereby jeopardising the lives of Christians.

Gideon Yakubu Morik, one of the few Christian members of the state assembly, dissociated themselves from the session which received the report and the recommendations reached. He argued that there has been enough blood-letting in the state and called for calm and caution.

Southern Kaduna Peoples Union, SOKAPU, an umbrella association of Southern Kaduna people who are mostly Christians and animists rose stoutly to condemn the report. SOKAPU punctured holes in the reasoning behind the setting-up of a committee to harmonise existing laws on the same day that the assembly received its report. It claimed the committee was a subtle attempt to start the implementation of Sharia. Said it: "Such connivance shall be and is accordingly rejected as being repugnant to acceptable norms". SOKAPU says Kaduna should be split into two to avoid a religious war in the state.

Ahmed Makarfi, the state governor, said state creation cannot be done on religious lines. The youth wing of SOKAPU under Jacob Magaji and Pias Musa, chairman and protem scribe is more militant about the issue. They said: "We call on the Kaduna State judiciary to remove all the Muslim judges in the area courts in Southern Kaduna and replace them with indigenous judges versed in and having respect for the customs and traditions of our people".

Makarfi told Newswatch last week that it cannot be done. Said he: "Do you also go and remove Christian workers from Muslim areas? Is that feasible? But in any case, that was the reform we said we were going to

do and then again, it was misinterpreted to mean a different thing. When we harmonised the courts, people complained, but if we separate them, people would then be clear ab-initio where they should go to in the first place."

A new group has entered the fray. Gbagyi Development Association, CDA, encompassing the original owners of most part of Kaduna are equally making demands. On June 9, Ishaku Zarmai Kurmin Gwari issued a statement calling on government to create distinct chiefdoms for its own people. Makarfi again said a committee was looking into this and that it would submit its report soon for government to implement.

Apart from communal agitations, Makarfi was also the whipping boy of the state assembly. Shortly after the submission of the report June 6, the committee members claimed they received quit notices from their quarters. They swore that the notice came from the governor. Makarfi denied this. He said the police moved into the quarters to prevent the lawmakers from being attacked by trouble makers.

Another thorny issue is an alleged order to relocate the people of Goningora on the Kaduna-Suleja highway. The GDA whose citizens would have been seriously affected by the order, said the proposal is unacceptable. Said GDA: "It shall be resisted through all legal and legitimate means". Goningora is the place where Ahmed Abdullahi, a member of the federal house of representative, was killed in May this year.

The GDA found an ally in SOKAPU, which says moves to resettle the people of Goningora is an attempt to trample on the rights of the indigenes of southern Kaduna, Makarfi said what he suggested was that those who were scattered from the main settlement should be moved closer so that they can share better social amenities and also give room for proper planning of the area.

Said he: "This is part of our problems; government makes a position and the opposite of what we said goes out and when we clarify it, it would be used as if we changed our earlier position".

The military were not left out of the controversies. Alex Ogomudia, a major-general and commandant of 1 Mechanised Division of the Nigerian army, Kaduna, joined the fray. Ogomudia whose troops have been called to the streets to enforce the 12.00 midnight to 6.00 a.m curfew, addressed the media June 15. He showed a video clipping of the effects of the two crisis and warned residents that though the army was out of governance for good, it would not fold its hands and watch security compromised.

He warned that the full force of the law would be brought to bear on anyone found fomenting trouble in the state. Said he: "The soldiers are covered by the laws, both by the penal code and the criminal law to deal decisively and ruthlessly with any situation in Kaduna. So it is better to keep peace and abhor violence".

He also confirmed the arrest of Idi Abdullahi, a captain in the last crisis. He promised that once investigations were completed and he was found guilty, he would be court-marshalled and prosecuted. It was the first time the army made a statement on the Kaduna crisis.

While nocturnal and day light meetings were going on to try and calm frayed nerves, those arrested in the two crisis were appearing in courts in the state. Makarfi told Newswatch last week that there were still 5,000 refugees to be resettled according to official figures. Observers say the figures would be higher. He explained that assistance to the first set of those being helped to rebuild their lives cost N60 million.

The governor disclosed that an additional N251 million would be paid out this week to the second phase of beneficiaries. The state government is sourcing part of the fund while assistance also comes from donor agencies. He said that the state had huge potentials and that it was capable of surmounting its problems provided rumour-mongers and mischief-makers are persuaded to sheath their tongues!

 We're managing the situation

Governor Ahmed Makarfi of Kaduna State speaks with Tunde Asaju, principal staff writer, on the renewed tension in the state.

Newswatch: What is the situation in Kaduna now? There are fears that Kaduna will boil again over the recommendation of Sharia by the state house of Assembly.

Makarfi: The situation is not different from what it was before. The stories you hear outside are completely different from what you see on ground. But I believe misconception on both sides and the attitude to talk even before trying to verify issues account for the kind of information that the outside would get to hear about Kaduna. The first reaction when people hear anything is not to ask the government but go to the press. But the time the facts are known, then they are put to shame, they find out that they've gone to press for nothing. We are

trying to tell indigenes of the state that they are destroying their own state. I believe there is a change of attitude generally and people are beginning to ask whether there are unseen forces pushing these kind of things and what is the objective. There's a lot of caution on both sides.

Newswatch: Legislators claim they got an ejection notice from you. Is it correct?

Makarfi: That is part of the news in Kaduna. If anybody would go there, he would see them there. Definitely, we never knew the committee would submit its report at that materials time, but the members are an independent arm of the government and they have done theirs and it is for government to manage the affairs, balancing the various opinions on this matter, so as not to allow it to lead to an unpleasant situation.

Newswatch: So what happened, no ejection order from your side?

Makarfi: There was no such an order. Definitely at the time they submitted the report, there was a seeming confusion which is genuine if you take into consideration what happened before. Under that, you tend to find people moving from one place to the other not knowing what might happen next.

Newswatch: We heard police moved in to secure the place.

Makarfi: Indeed, because when you consider what happened in the first instance in February and May, if you get an inkling of anything that could lead to the possibility of a breakdown of law and order, and you know of possible targets, you move in to secure such targets.

Newswatch: You are said to have backed-down on resettling Goningora community. What is the position?

Makarfi: It's not an issue of backing down, it's an issue of saying the wrong thing. Government did not say it was going to demolish Goningora or it was going to take them away. Government said it would replan the

area and stop unplanned development. And that those located away from Goningora would be moved to join the main Goningora so that the place can be planned and allocated to people for residential and commercial purposes. This was our position but the media reported that government is to demolish Goningora, we never said that. This is part of our problems: Government makes a position and the opposite of what we said goes out and when we clarify it, it would be used as if we changed an earlier position.

Newswatch: Would it be because you don't do enough consultations with leaders of appropriate groups?

Makarfi: We met with the leaders of the community, they were there, their village heads were there, they knew what we discussed. It was not a unilateral decision, the council chairman and the district heads were there, village and ward heads were present.

Newswatch: Gbagyis are also asking for chiefdoms? Nine or twelve or so?

Makarfi: I don't know the details of all that. All I know is that there is a committee which is looking into the possibility of creating additional chiefdoms and emirates. I know that the Gbagyis have made a presentation which is before the committee. If a possible and workable arrangement is worked out, I will not be standing in anybody's way.

Newswatch: SOKAPU wants the removal of old "Muslim" judges from their areas for insensitivity to their culture and tradition.

Makarfi: Do you also go and remove Christian workers from Muslim areas? Is that feasible? But in any case, that was the reform we said we are going to do, and then again it was misinterpreted to mean a different thing. We said, look, there is a problem -before the creation of the area courts you have the native courts or customary as the case may be. You have the Muslim courts which were basically the Sharia courts and we had the mixed courts. Now, when the area courts reform came, it merged all of them, therefore, there's a lot of confusion. So we said one way of getting out of this is to get back to what we had before so that there is no mix-up or going to the wrong court since you know ab initio which court to go to. And people would be able to differentiate between Sharia law and others. They can choose. We came out and said

since there has been calls for this separation from 1980, now let's do it. By the time we do it, we'll start knowing where we were. We discussed and it was understood and then later again, people started complaining. Again they are calling for the same thing: total confusion and out right mischief.

Newswatch: What role is your party playing in all these? It seems they leave everything to you?

Makarfi: The party does not want open involvement. It makes behind-the-scene moves to make sure that proper reasoning brings back the people to what they were before. Not to be seen to be taking any particular side.

Newswatch: What is the refugee situation now? How many people are in camps?

Makarfi: We still have some 5,000 people registered, there are some numbers unregistered but we have concluded arrangements to give all those we have not given assistance some assistance. But in some areas, we are not in a hurry for them to go back, because we're going from one community to another to see what we need to do to restore and reconcile people. We believe the return of some people to some areas will have to be based on full and tangible reconciliation and understanding between them.

Newswatch: How long would this take?

Makarfi: You can't put a time frame to it but one thing, I've not seen a community that wants to stay segregated. Neither the Christians nor the Muslims want to stay segregated. They want to go back to what they were before, I believe that's a good sign to know that it would take place.

Newswatch: You planned to help people resettle.

Makarfi: We've done the first phase, we are going to do the second phase. We are cross-checking the vouchers, the names to avoid

duplication. When the lists are ready, possibly next week, the second which is the largest phase should start.

Newswatch: At what cost, phase one?

Makarfi: It was some N61 million and this would consume some N251 million.

Newswatch: Where's the fund coming from?

Makarfi: Well from various donations.

Newswatch: Is this not going to affect ability to deliver on promises.

Makarfi: Well, you can't achieve you targets 100 percent. It's an unfortunate responsibility we have to shoulder. That's the price we have to pay when this happens.

=====

Second Nigerian state adopts Moslem sharia.

By Mike Oboh

09:42 ET

Reuters English News Service

(C) Reuters Limited 2000.

KANO, Nigeria, June 21 (Reuters) - Nigeria's most populous northern state proclaimed the adoption of Islamic sharia law on Wednesday but defused immediate fears of sectarian violence by delaying its application until November.

Tens of thousands of jubilant Moslems chanted "Allahu Akbar" (God is Greater) as state Governor Rabi'u Kwankwaso made the proclamation at a brief ceremony on a prayer ground ringed by para-military troops and armoured vehicles.

Fears that the proclamation would cause violence between Moslems and members of the Christian minority in the state's capital city Kano did

not immediately materialise.

Kwankwaso appeared to have defused tension by deferring the application of the strict, Koran-based penal code to the beginning of the Moslem holy month Ramadan in late November.

Moves earlier this year to adopt sharia in the more cosmopolitan neighbouring state of Kaduna triggered sectarian clashes in which hundreds of people died in February and May.

Hundreds more people were killed in the largely Christian southeast of Nigeria in reprisal attacks on Moslem immigrants from the north.

Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo called that crisis the most serious since the 1960s civil war over breakaway Biafra.

"Due to the advice of the chief Imam, the implementation of sharia law will commence in the first day of Ramadan period of this year," Kwankwaso told the estimated 100,000 Moslem faithful gathered for the proclamation in Kano.

Kano has the biggest Moslem population of any Nigeria's 36 states. Some 90 percent of its eight million inhabitants are Moslems.

But President Obasanjo is under pressure from non-Moslems to seek a Supreme Court ruling on the constitutionality of sharia in secular Nigeria.

The proclamation ceremony lasted just 10 minutes as police battled to control the chanting crowds. At least 11 people collapsed from exhaustion and were taken to hospital, witnesses said.

NO EXEMPTIONS TO SHARIA ALLOWED

Shops and major businesses in Kano remained closed as non-Moslems, especially from the south of Nigeria who dominate commercial activity in the state, stayed in doors for fear of an outbreak of violence.

The state government declared Wednesday a holiday in a bid to avert violence.

Many Kano residents, including the majority Moslems, expressed relief that the proclamation passed peacefully.

But despite the delay in applying sharia, Kwankwaso told a news conference later that there would be no exemptions from it for

non-Moslems.

"There is no area where sharia will not be implemented," Kwankwaso said.

He had previously said the predominantly non-Moslem area of Sabon-Gare on the eastern edge of Kano city would be exempt, but admitted that he was under pressure from Islamic leaders to allow no exceptions.

Most ordinary Moslems in northern Nigeria view sharia as the answer to decades of misrule that have spawned crushing poverty and social problems. But non-Moslems denounce sharia's strict penalties such as amputation of hands for theft and beheading for adultery.

Kano is the second Nigerian state to proclaim the Koran-based law after northern Zamfara state. Other northern states looked certain to be encouraged by the peaceful launch in Kano to go ahead with plans to adopt sharia despite an agreement with the federal government to freeze such moves.

Nigeria's population of more than 110 million people is roughly evenly split between Moslems mainly in the north and Christians and animists mainly in the south, making issues of religion very volatile.

Obasanjo, a Christian who took office in May 1999 after 15 years of army rule, has in the past condemned the adoption of sharia. But he faces a dilemma in the popularity of sharia in the north.

THE GUARDIAN

- Northern Kano State Governor Rabi'u Kwankwaso says will check violence during launch of controversial Moslems sharia law on Wednesday.

- Northern Zamfara state legislators accuses governor of violating sharia law. Zamfara is first Nigerian state to implement the strict Islamic pena code system.

Nigerian Moslems mass for sharia declaration.

By Mike Oboh

05:48 ET

Reuters English News Service

(C) Reuters Limited 2000.

KANO, Nigeria, June 21 (Reuters) - Tens of thousands of Moslem faithful gathered in the Nigerian city Kano on Wednesday for the controversial

proclamation of Islamic sharia law in northern Kano state.

Witnesses said more than 50,000 people had arrived at the city's Moslem Eid praying ground by 6.30 a.m. (0530 GMT) for the proclamation by state Governor Rabiu Kwankwaso expected at around 11 a.m. (1000 GMT).

Kano has the biggest Moslem population of any of Nigeria's 36 states. Some 90 per cent of the eight million inhabitants are Moslems.

But the decision to adopt sharia has caused tension and many minority Christians and animists, ethnic Ibos and Yorubas originally from south-east Nigeria are reported to have left rather than live under the strict Moslem law.

The flight of non-Moslems from Kano could damage the state's economy since they dominate commerce, particularly trade in electronics, textiles and household goods. Kano banks have already reported a massive run on deposits because withdrawals by non-Moslems leaving and heading south.

Governor Kwankwaso appealed for calm on Tuesday, urging youths not to take the law into their own hands during and after the proclamation of sharia.

The central government, fearing that it could trigger sectarian violence, has sent troops and riot police to strengthen security in the state.

Hundreds of people were killed in February and May when opposition to the adoption of sharia caused riots between Christians and Moslems in Kaduna, 220 km (140 miles) from Kano.

Kano is the second Nigerian state to proclaim the Koran-based law after northern Zamfara state. Christians have been angered that even non-Moslem women in Zamfara are now obliged to wear Islamic veils and men and women are not allowed to appear together in public.

Sharia law also imposes harsh punishments for criminal offences, including amputation of hands for theft and death for adultery.

Witnesses said the Kano crowds displayed portraits of Ahmed Sani, the Zamfara state governor who proclaimed sharia.

The Kano state government has declared Wednesday a holiday in a bid to avert violence, and shops and major businesses in the city, mostly operated by non-Moslems, were closed and the streets deserted.

Kwankwaso says he is under pressure from Islamic leaders to apply sharia to all Kano inhabitants, but he has said the predominantly non-Moslem area of Sabon-Gare on the eastern edge of Kano city will be exempt from sharia.

Up to one million at launch of Islamic law in Nigeria

06/21/2000

Agence France-Presse
(Copyright 2000)

KANO, Nigeria, June 21 (AFP) - Up to one million people attended a ceremony Wednesday to launch a code of strict Islamic law in Kano, the most populous city in northern Nigeria, officials said.

The size of the crowd forced Kano State Governor Rabiu Kwankwaso to cut short plans for an address to the gathering, official spokesman Sani Mohammed said.

Hundreds of thousands of mainly young Muslim men -- one of the largest crowds ever witnessed in Kano -- massed in and around the Eid religious parade ground in the centre of the city.

Hospital officials said two people were crushed to death in the crowd and more than 50 fainted from the heat and suffocation and required hospital treatment.

Two crushed, more than 50 faint at Sharia launch in Nigeria

06/21/2000

Agence France-Presse
(Copyright 2000)

KANO, Nigeria, June 21 (AFP) - Two people were crushed to death and more than 50 fainted and required hospital treatment when a massive crowd of up to one million people gathered here Wednesday to witness the launch of Islamic law here, hospital officials said.

Police and the Red Cross worked to evacuate people taken ill in the extreme heat of the Eid Ground in the centre of Kano where State Governor Rabiu Kwankwaso prepared to declare the launch of Sharia.

The size of the crowd forced Kano State Governor Rabiu Kwankwaso to cut

short plans for an address to the gathering, official spokesman Sani Mohammed said.

Hundreds of thousands of mainly young Muslim men -- one of the largest crowds ever witnessed in Kano -- massed in and around the Eid religious parade ground in the centre of the city.

Drinkers, sex-workers, and the fearful flee Sharia in Nigeria by Peter Cunliffe-Jones = (PICTURES) =

06/21/2000

Agence France-Presse
(Copyright 2000)

KANO, Nigeria, June 21 (AFP) - At a book-shop in the Sabon Gari southern ghetto district of this ancient semi-desert city, Godwin Nnadiri, 29, bid goodbye to his friends.

Nnadiri is a Christian from Anambra State in southeast Nigeria and wanted to get out of northern Nigeria's Muslim-dominated and most populous city ahead of Wednesday's declaration of strict Islamic law.

Nnadiri, like thousands of other ethnic Ibos from the mainly Christian southeast, ran a small business here since he moved to the city in 1986. But fears of more ethnic violence, following bloody religious unrest in nearby Kaduna this year, have driven him and countless like him to leave.

"I have to leave this town. I do not feel safe. I do not feel secure at all," he said, before getting into his car and driving south from Kano.

On Wednesday, Kano State Governor Rabi'u Kwankwaso was expected to declare the introduction of Islamic law, known as the Sharia, in the state, although officials have declined to reveal plans for its exact implementation.

The fear in the Sabon Gari district Tuesday was that the Islamic punishments and ban on alcohol would be extended to the Christian-dominated areas. Residents also feared that Muslim youths would take advantage of the declaration to move into the ghetto and attack non-

Muslims.

The bookshop Nnadiri was visiting lies on Church Street in the district inhabited for centuries by southerners and other outsiders in Kano, a vast city with a population estimated at between five and eight million.

A few hundred yards from Church Street, Chioma C., the owner and operator of The Best Cool Spot, a small bar and brothel, was rueing the introduction of Islamic law.

"This is stopping my business," said the 42-year-old from Imo State. "All my girls are going. Ten have gone already and only two are left. Everyone is scared," she said, as one of the girls remaining glanced from under lowered eyelashes at a group of foreign journalists.

On the wall was a piece of paper setting out house rules for the 'girls': a fine of 500 naira (five dollars) for gossiping, 1,000 naira for leaving underwear lying around on the floor, and 1,500 naira for sex with anyone who is not a paying customer.

"Business is hard," Chioma said. "Even the drinkers are not coming. I have had to cut the price of a beer from 50 to 30 naira," she complained.

Half an hour by car across the city, Governor Kwankwaso's spokesman, Sani Mohammed, insisted that law-abiding non-Muslims had nothing to fear from Sharia and said the government had taken "all the measures needed" to prevent any anti-Christian violence.

Further across the city, sitting cross-legged on a mat in his simple home, the Chief Imam of Kano State, Sheikh Isa Waziri, said Muslims who have been in Kano for centuries, had a right to live under Islamic law.

"The Sharia will improve the morals of society. Vices and corruption will cease," he said. "Ninety percent of Kano people are Muslims and as Muslims they have to support Sharia. Sharia is sent by Allah. There is no going back," he said.

Augustin Ogu, a beer parlour owner in the Sabon Gari district, agreed that Muslims have the right to live under Sharia, but said that Nigeria was a federation of ethnic groups and religions and as such, it was dangerous to make any religion dominant in any area.

Chris Udeagha, an electricals shop owner, said the Christians in Kano did not want to fight, but would defend themselves.

"Kano is a volatile place. People are very uncompromising over religion. The government might say it can guarantee our lives and freedom, but it can't. We will not start fighting with anybody. But we will defend ourselves," he said.

Islamic law spreads to largest city in northern Nigeria by Peter Cunliffe-Jones = (PICTURES) =

06/21/2000

Agence France-Presse
(Copyright 2000)

KANO, Nigeria, June 21 (AFP) - Authorities in northern Nigeria's most populous city were preparing Wednesday to declare the introduction of strict Islamic law, marking a new step for Islam in Africa's most populous country.

Kano State Governor Rabi'u Kwankwaso was due at a religious parade ground in the centre of this 1,000-year-old city before midday Wednesday to declare plans to introduce the strict Islamic code, known as Sharia, in the state bordering the Sahara desert.

Islam has been a central part of life in northern Nigeria for centuries and Muslims form a 90 percent majority of the population in Kano.

The city is volatile and fears were widespread Tuesday of clashes with the large Christian minority over the introduction of Sharia.

Kano will become the fourth northern Nigerian state since October to declare Sharia after Zamfara, Sokoto and Niger. By virtue of its size, with a population estimated at between five and eight million, Kano is by far the most significant state to adopt the code so far.

The declaration of Sharia in the northern states is seen by many as risking an eventual splitting up of Nigeria, home to 120 million people and the world's most populous black nation, between its Muslim-dominated north and Christian-dominated south.

Officials here have so far declined to set out details of exactly how they plan to implement Sharia, who will be affected by the laws, and which if any areas of the cosmopolitan city will be exempt.

In recent days, thousands of southern Christians living in Kano have left the city, fearing a repeat of unrest seen here last July or a spreading of the religious riots that left more than 1,000 dead in February and more than 300 dead last month in nearby Kaduna.

The government of President Olusegun Obasanjo has sought to stop the introduction of Sharia law in northern states and in April the governors of the 19 northern states announced an agreement to consult first with Christian leaders.

The declaration of Sharia in Kano, which aides to Kwankwaso said was forced on the governor by local political pressures, appears to be the first violation of that agreement.

The governors of other states, including Katsina and Kaduna, are also under considerable pressure to introduce the code, following the precedent set in Zamfara, Kano and the other states.

=====

Zamfara Government (sic) Faints At Sharia Launch

P.M. News (Lagos)

June 21, 2000

By Babajide Ototoju, Moses Uchendu & Tajudeen Suleiman/Kano

Lagos - The Zamfara State Governor, Alhaji Ahmed Sani Yerimah led muslim faithful in prayer at the official launch of the Sharia in Kano State this morning. However, shortly after leading the congregational prayer, the bearded Governor who was the first to launch the controversial Sharia legal system in Nigeria, fainted and had to be rushed to the Government House Clinic in the state capital.

At the time of going to press, the condition of Governor Sani could not be ascertained.

The police had a hectic time controlling traffic as thousands of Muslim faithful from different parts of Northern Nigeria converged in Kano for the historic public launch of the Islamic legal code.

Lorry loads of Muslim youths, including women shouting "Allahu Akbar", converged at the Eid Prayer Ground, opposite the Sani Abacha Stadium, Kano, venue of the launching.

The gathering, against the expectation of many, was not violent,

although a good number of anti-riot policemen and other security operatives gave cover to the gathering.

Kano State Governor, Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso, who was expected to read a prepared speech on the occasion did not do so.

In the speech which was written in Hausa and distributed to the press, the Governor said the implementation of Sharia would wait until November 26. The first day of Muslim Ramadan.

Sources say the Governor was advised not to read the speech at such a gathering, because of fanatics who may be dissatisfied with the postponement of Sharia implementation. It was feared that such people could trigger violence which may go beyond the control of the police.

Similarly, Chief Tony Anenih, Minister of Works, was despatched to Kano yesterday, to hold a meeting with Governor Kwankwaso.

A palpable fear of violence has engulfed the ancient city as a result of the Sharia matter. This forced non-indigenes, especially Yoruba and Igbo traders in the city to close down their shops this morning.

The commercial heartbeat of the city, regarded as the business capital of northern Nigeria, Sabon-Gari, is now like a graveyard as markets have been closed, while residents of the area have locked themselves in their homes as a result of fear of an outbreak of violence.

It is believed that if the implementation of Sharia Law is extended to Sabon-Gari, it may spark a demonstration of a huge proportion by the Christians who are in overwhelming majority in the area and who have complained about not being consulted even when it would hurt their businesses.

Among the streets where shops were closed this morning were France Road, where the town's major market for electronics is located, Niger Road and Kroda, where Kano's biggest market for foodstuffs is located. The ultra modern Mohammadu Rimi Market has also been shut.

Apart from Sabon-Gari area, the city's biggest textile market, "Kantin Kwori" has also been closed, just as the city's biggest spare parts market at Kofar Ruwa has been closed down by the spare parts sellers, who are mainly of Igbo origin.

Already, street urchins in the city have begun "enforcing" the Sharia Law by molesting young girls whom they accuse of dressing indecently. There are reports of "Kano Area Boys" raping some of the girls all in

the name of enforcing the Sharia.

Meanwhile, as the Kano State government launched the (Sharia) today, despite criticisms, many banks in the state may be forced to close down

This was informed by massive withdrawal of money and closing of bank accounts mostly by non indigenes in Kano who are fleeing the state over plans to implement the Sharia legal system.

Most Igbo businessmen and bar owners who are apprehensive over the Sharia palaver, with the memories of the Kaduna Sharia riots still fresh in their minds, are said to have suspended their businesses and would rather prefer to relocate to other states.

Banks in the state, especially those located in the heartbeat of Kano have been recording low patronage since last week as majority of their customers, who are mostly Christians from southern Nigeria, are trooping in and out to either close their accounts or withdraw the bulk of their monies lodged with the banks.

Prostitutes, hotel owners and bar owners who will be badly affected by the introduction of Sharia in the state have temporarily closed down since Monday as they fear being caught in the Sharia web.

Despite the drafting of several armoured tanks and heavily-armed anti-riot policemen to the state, tension is still mounting in the state.

Already, some strategic areas in the Kano metropolis have been declared no- go-areas as stern-looking policemen have simply taken over security there, just as some regular policemen maintain routine patrol of Kano city.

Big Nigerian state adopts Sharia

Hundreds of thousands of Muslims in northern Nigeria have celebrated the adoption of Islamic, Sharia law in the region's most populous state, Kano. A rally in Kano city greeted the proclamation with chants of Allahu Akbar or God is Great; reports say two people were crushed to death in the crowd and dozens collapsed in the heat. The move came despite fierce opposition from the Christian minority in the north, and despite fears that it could revive the sectarian violence that has left hundreds dead this year.

The BBC Nigeria correspondent says northern Muslims are overwhelmingly in favour of a legal code which includes punishments such as amputation and flogging, which they believe will combat corruption and lawlessness.

Our correspondent says it's now highly likely that more northern states will adopt Sharia, and the issue is putting Nigerian unity under strain.

>From the newsroom of the BBC World Service

Sharia Law Launched In Kano
Panafrican News Agency
June 21, 2000

Lagos, Nigeria (PANA) - Thousands of Moslem faithful Wednesday thronged the Eid praying ground in the northern city of Kano to witness the proclamation of the Sharia, the Islamic legal code, amid tight security to forestall any acts of violence.

"This is a momentous day in the history of Kano state...It is the day that Sharia is launched," an elated Rabi'u Kwankwaso, the Kano state governor said.

He, however, explained that the controversial law would not come into effect until December, dousing the fears of non-Muslims, some of whom have sought protection at the Sabon-Gari area of the town which is home to non-indigenous and Christians.

The governor said that December was chosen on the advice of a top Muslim cleric who said that the best day to start the implementation of the law was the first day of the Islamic month of Ramadan, due this year in December.

No violence was reported, though two persons were reportedly crushed to death and more than 50 others had to be ferried to the hospital after they fainted.

The fear of violence stemmed from the crisis that greeted the proposal to introduce the Sharia to neighbouring Kaduna in February, when hundreds of people died and property worth millions of naira were destroyed in a clash between Moslems and Christian opponents of the code.

The violence sparked reprisal killings in the southeastern part of the country and forced Christians to put pressure on President Olusegun Obasanjo to seek clarification on the constitutionality of the law at the Supreme Court.

Before Wednesday's launch, Obasanjo despatched his works and housing minister, Tony Anenih, to Kano to assess the situation there.

Employing some diplomacy, Anenih told governor Kwankwaso during an hour-long meeting Tuesday that "Mr. President sent me to Kano to commend your Excellency for maintaining peace in the state and to continue to maintain peace."

Security had been stepped up in the city ahead of the launch, with heavily armed soldiers and policemen patrolling the city in armoured personnel carriers.

The tension that gripped the commercial city prior to the launch was largely due to the statement from the Advisory Committee on Sharia implementation in the state that no part of the city, including army barracks and military formations would be exempted from the law.

The statement forced the Nigerian military to react Tuesday, saying that the law would not be effective in its barracks or military formations.

Army spokesman Felix Chukwuma said only the Commander- In-Chief of the armed forces was constitutionally empowered to impose laws on military barracks or formations.

"We are in Nigerian Army not Kano state Army. We are responsible to the federal government. We don't have two armies.... What obtains in Lagos, Enugu or Benin formations of the army is what will obtain in Kano formation," Ugbo, a colonel, said.

"As far as Sharia is concerned, we in the military don't have anything to do with it. We take our orders from the Commander-In-Chief," he added.

Kano has become the fourth state to launch the Sharia after Zamfara, Niger and Sokoto states. Several other states in the north, dominated by Muslims, are under pressure to introduce the law.

The federal government and the governors of the 19 states in the north had agreed in the aftermath of the Kaduna crisis to put the

introduction of the Sharia on hold and revert to the existing penal code in the states.

The governors later promised to set up a committee comprising Muslim and Christian leaders "to dialogue on those aspects of Sharia not included in the (existing) penal code".

Analysis: Sharia takes hold

Single-sex schools are the rule in Sharia states

By BBC News Online's Justin Pearce

Muslims and Christians alike will be affected by the decision to introduce Islamic law in the Nigerian state of Kano.

But the state - which has a substantial Christian minority - appears to be taking a phased approach to the implementation of Sharia, perhaps to try to minimise the reaction from opponents of the plan.

Kano has already banned prostitution, gambling and the consumption of alcohol, ahead of the formal adoption of Sharia.

The state has not made public its plans for putting other aspects of Sharia into practice - but could follow the lead set by Zamfara - the first Nigerian state to adopt Sharia - in approving laws to force the public to comply with what the state government regards as suitable Islamic behaviour.

Single-sex schools are now compulsory in Zamfara, and the desire to keep men and women apart in public places has also prompted the introduction of women-only taxis.

Women's football has also been outlawed - Nigeria's women's soccer team may be among the world's best, but an activity which involves women wearing shorts and running around a field does not conform with a strict Islamic view of suitable female behaviour.

Punishments

Where Sharia is likely to make a major difference is in the adoption of the Islamic penal code which allows for amputation as a punishment for theft, and flogging as a penalty for adultery or extra-marital sex.

Mosques were targetted as Christians protested against Sharia in other states

In one widely-reported case, Zamfara courts ordered a man's hand to be cut off as punishment for cattle theft. State officials said the man was given the opportunity to defend his case, but declined to do so.

Zamfara has offered incentives as well as punishments to achieve its goal of enforcing strict Islamic morality. Prostitutes in the state have been offered money to stop plying their trade, and officials have spoken of subsidies for women who want to get married but cannot afford the expense.

In Zamfara, the fact that the population is overwhelmingly Muslim meant there was no violent backlash against Sharia.

But while Muslims are in the majority in all the northern Nigerian states, some states also have a substantial Christian population.

One such state is Kaduna - where serious fighting broke out as soon as the authorities mentioned the possible introduction of Sharia. Kaduna has since backtracked on its plans.

Risky

In Kano, the Christian minority is even larger - making the state's adoption of Sharia law particularly controversial - and potentially dangerous.

Kano city is also the main commercial centre for northern Nigeria, with numerous businesses run by Christians as well as Muslims.

In the past year the city has seen serious clashes between the Hausa and Yoruba communities, two ethnic groups which are associated with Islam and Christianity respectively.

Supporters of Sharia argue that aspects of Islamic law have long been practised among Muslim communities in northern Nigeria, and that the official adoption of Sharia ought not to worry Christians.

Kano Governor Rabiu Kwankwaso has said the predominantly non-Muslim area of Sabon-Gare on the eastern edge of Kano city will be exempt from Sharia.

Nevertheless, a system of law which enforces the moral code of one

particular religious group can only add to the tensions in a country where religion is second only to ethnicity as a cause of conflict.

 Muslims celebrate as Islamic law declared in Nigeria

KANO, Nigeria, June 21 (AFP) -

A massive crowd of up to one million Muslims celebrated Wednesday as authorities in the city of Kano declared Islamic law in northern Nigeria's most populous state.

The declaration, made by Governor Rabiu Kwankwaso, sets the north of Nigeria more firmly than ever on a collision course with the government of President Olusegun Obasanjo who has appealed repeatedly for the Islamic code not to be enforced.

>From early Wednesday, hundreds of thousands of Muslims, mainly young men, packed into the Eid Ground in the centre of Kano to witness the declaration of the strict Islamic code, known as Sharia.

Two people were crushed to death by the crowd, estimated by officials at up to one million, and more than 50 fainted and were hospitalised in the heat, hospital officials said.

Kwankwaso, who had to cut short his address to the crowd because of fears over crowd safety, told government and religious dignitaries it was a historic day in the city, founded as a slave and gold trading centre 1,000 years ago on the edge of the Sahara desert.

"This is a momentous day in the history of Kano State. It is the day that Sharia is launched," Kwankwaso told officials here.

The governor said he had been advised by the Kano State chief imam, Sheikh Isa Waziri, that the best date to start enforcing Sharia would be the first day of the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, due this year in early December.

"We have agreed," he said.

Before then, the Kano version of the code setting out legal provisions and punishments will be drawn up, Islamic courts will be established and an Islamic judiciary will be trained, he said.

Waziri said it was a day to be celebrated by every Muslim.

"Sharia is the backbone, the compass, of Muslims all over the world,

showing them their direction," he said.

Fears have been expressed that some sections of the Muslim youth in Kano would use the occasion to attack minority Christians living in a ghetto known as Sabon Gari.

Kwankwaso said that Islam was a religion of peace and tolerance and that any attacks on those of other religions were un-Islamic.

"Islam urges people to follow in the footsteps of the prophet, and show patience, honesty and trustworthiness and preserve the rights of women, children and neighbours," he said.

However, the governor said the code would be enforced in hotels, federal army and police barracks, and areas of the city that are dominated by Christians.

"In the whole of Kano State, there will be no area where Sharia is not implemented. There will be no exceptions," he said.

Outside the crowd celebrated with great cries of "Allahu akhbar" (God is Greater) and Islamic lawyer Abubakar Mika'il Hassan explained that Muslims believed that the introduction of Sharia would cure the many problems besetting this country.

"This has a very long history in Nigeria," Hassan told AFP.

"We Muslims have been yearning to see the Sharia code be implemented for many years. It is our right. We are grateful for the God almighty that Sharia will be implemented today," he said.

The declaration of plans to introduce Islamic law in Kano makes the state the fourth since October to declare Sharia, though one of those states, Niger, has partly rescinded.

Attending the ceremony Wednesday were several northern state governors including the governor of Yobe state, who announced he had sent a bill on Sharia to his State House of Assembly, and the governor of Jigawa, who said Sharia would be declared there on August 2.

Katsina and Kaduna states are also under pressure to declare the code.

Nigeria State Proclaims Islamic Law
By GILBERT DA COSTA, Associated Press Writer

ABUJA, Nigeria (AP) - Muslims in Nigeria's north cheered the formal declaration of Islamic law Wednesday, despite an upsurge in religious violence that has already killed thousands of people and forced many of the region's minority Christians to flee.

The proclamation made by Kano state Governor Rabiu Kwankwaso was met with deafening chants of "Allah Akbar," or "God is great," from the crowd gathered in the state capital's main prayer grounds to celebrate the announcement, according to residents and local journalists contacted by telephone.

"It is the fulfillment of our dreams," said Hassan Dambaba, a school teacher in Kano city. "Now we can practice our religion as we should."

Speak your mind
 Discuss this story with other people.
 [Start a Conversation]
 (Requires Yahoo! Messenger)

Armed soldiers and anti-riot police patrolled Kano city Wednesday and guarded key intersections.

Kano, the fourth and largest Nigerian state to adopt Islamic law, or sharia, has a history of ethnic and religious clashes. Despite government assurances, hundreds of Christians have been fleeing the predominantly Muslim state since last week fearing more violence.

Islamic courts created under the new legal system have the power to try criminal cases involving Muslims and mete out punishments. Sharia supporters have said the laws would only apply to Muslims, but the change has angered and frightened many Christians.

The new courts have already handed down sentences such as floggings, and a convicted cow thief had his hand amputated.

Plans to implement Islamic law in the northern state of Kaduna triggered bitter religious bloodletting in February and March that killed up to 2,000 people.

Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation, is sharply divided along ethnic and religious lines. Thousands have been killed since President Olusegun Obasanjo took office last year, ending 15 years of military rule.

Southern Nigeria is predominantly Christian, and northern Nigeria is overwhelmingly Muslim. Northerners dominate Nigeria's military, and wielded immense power during army rule.

Wednesday was declared a public holiday in Kano. But sharia does not come into full effect until Nov. 26, the first day of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, to give the government time to enact the necessary laws and to train judges in the Islamic code.

Others states also plan to follow suit. The northern state of Jigawa announced Wednesday that it would introduce sharia in August.

Kano governor to President: Fear not over Sharia

>From Clifford Ndujihe and

Rhikardo Chidi Obih, Kano

THE tension occasioned by the Sharia is certainly not lost on those who are insisting on adopting the Islamic legal system even in the face of the violence and controversy that have followed it in other places. And, in response to this palpable fear across the land, Governor Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso of Kano State has said to President Olusegun Obasanjo and Nigerians: All, especially non-Moslems, have no cause to lose their sleep over today's planned adoption of sharia rule by Kano State.

He gave the pledge while receiving a Federal government delegation yesterday led by Works and Housing Minister, Tony Anenih.

Although the meeting was held behind closed doors, The Guardian learnt that the delegation told the governor of the Federal government's position on the issue and got assurances that peace would be maintained.

Kano, today joins another northern state, Zamfara, in the wholesale adoption of Sharia while several other states in the region have initiated moves toward that end.

Earlier, the deputy governor Abdullahi Umar Ganduje, who visited the Eid prayer ground venue of today's sharia launch, said adequate arrangements had been made for a successful launch of the judicial system and declared the day work-free.

He met with businessmen and members of the Manufacturers Association of

Nigeria (MAN) on business prospects and Islamic banking system ahead of full adoption of sharia.

Not unexpectedly, the population of Sabon-Gari quarters (reserved area for non-indigenes) has drastically reduced. Commercial sex workers especially, have fled to neighbouring states.

They are believed to be seeking refuge in states like Plateau, Nasarawa and Bauchi.

Those who vacated their homes on streets like Abedie, Freetown and Sanigiwa were seen riding on commercial motorcycles to motor parks at Angwa-Uku, Naibawa and New Road Street for onward journey down to their hometowns.

Beer sellers and hoteliers in Sabon-Gari were thrown into panic. Some have started disposing of their empty bottles of beer, while others turned their beer parlours to restaurants.

Most of the young girls who act as bar women while soliciting for men to pass night with have also fled the ancient city.

Businessmen in Sabon-Gari and even throughout the state who deal in female consumables are also affected.

Moreso, some house-wives were seen disposing of their dresses that the new Islamic legal system forbids.

Community leaders, The Guardian learnt, advised non-indigenes to be vigilant and ensure that their stalls are closed today.

On Monday, announcements were made in the markets that stalls should not open until noon.

Already, about 600 policemen have been deployed to Sabon-Gari to monitor the situation and ensure peace. And, to avoid unnecessary alarm, the policemen, The Guardian learnt, go in plain clothes.

Right from the Malam Aminu Kano International Airport along Katsina Road through Fagge, Dala and Nasarawa areas of the state, the citizens were however seen going about their normal businesses.

Meanwhile, the chairman of Kano State Sharia Implementation Committee, Sheik Isa Waziri, said that the implementation of the Islamic legal code will not be rushed as it is being speculated.

He said before the law becomes operational, necessary structures like the appointment of trial judges and establishment of sharia courts would be put in place to ensure its successful take-off.

But the committee said that sharia would be applied to Moslems and non-Moslems, amid indications that some Christians and people of other religions are fleeing ahead of tomorrow's introduction of the Islamic legal code.

Eminent islamic scholars who spoke to The Guardian in an interview over the sharia issue advised that it should not be rushed.

The state government and the Council of Ulamas, are also engaged in a battle of wits over the area of jurisdiction of the law. While the government is making exception of some areas inhabited by non-Moslems, the Islamic clerics are opposing the government's position.

As fall-out of the sharia crisis, banks in Kano are experiencing panicky withdrawal of deposits by Igbo traders, even as Moslem youths are said to have vowed to attack non-indigenes fleeing the state.

Security has, however, been beefed up in the state, as more soldiers have been deployed to Kano from Borno, Katsina and Sokoto states.

In another development, the State's House of Assembly may have begun the probing of the government's finances, even as it has asked the state government to make available to it records of all money received from the Federal government since its creation.

The speaker, Alhaji Ibrahim Gwarmai, told the House committee on finance to extend the probe to the 44 councils in the state as well as scrutinize how the 1999 budget was implemented.

 Sharia: Obasanjo sends Anenih to Kano

>From Yusuf Osi-Usman and Chukwuma Nwankwo, Kano

TODAY is a public holiday in Kano, the North's commercial headquarters, where there has been anxiety over the state government's plan to launch the Sharia Islamic legal code. The holiday is to give residents an opportunity to attend the launch.

Panic-stricken Kano residents were told yesterday to take it easy because their safety was sure.

The President brought in his weight to nip in the bud the Sharia fire ahead of today's launch.

He sent Minister of Works and Housing Chief Tony Anenih to assess the situation and discuss with Governor Musa Kwankwaso, who is to launch the Sharia.

Non-Moslems are jittery. Some have left the city and there has been a run on the banks. Hotels have been asked to close down.

Anenih, a chieftain of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), applied some diplomatese amid the mounting tension. He told the governor yesterday: "Mr. President sent me to Kano to commend your Excellency for maintaining peace in the state and to continue to maintain peace".

Kwankwaso, who held a one-hour closed-door meeting with the minister at the Government House, replied: "We will continue to do things that will make the President, the Federal Government and the PDP to be proud of us."

The meeting between President Obasanjo's emissary and the governor denied some advocates of Sharia who flooded the Government House access to the governor. They came to discuss today's event.

Dr Kwankwaso had earlier been summoned to Abuja by the Presidency, which later decided that Anenih should go to Kano to see things for himself, on behalf of the President who is away in Cairo, Egypt.

The publicity blitz embarked upon by some Islamic scholars to educate Kano residents on how to conduct themselves during and after the Sharia launch was intensified, 24 hours to the ceremony.

The scholars continued to make it clear that the launch of Sharia would not mean that the law had begun, warning that anyone who hid under Sharia to molest people would face stiff penalties.

As of yesterday, Kano municipal was calm as people went about their businesses.

But many non-indigenes and Christians were apprehensive about today's ceremony.

The Kano State chairman of the PDP, Alhaji Yusuf Kutama, said the party in the state was in support of steps taken by the state government to implement Sharia. At a press briefing in Kano, Kutama said that the party strongly welcomed the move by the state government to ensure

"moral and spiritual sanity" through the Sharia.

He described Sharia as a complete way of life prescribed for Moslems, pointing out that the introduction of the system was necessitated by "the situation we find ourselves today and the increasing rate of moral decadence in our society".

Kutama urged individuals and groups, especially party loyalists, to be vigilant on the activities of saboteurs and detractors "who do not see anything good in the state".

The chairman advised non-indigenes and non-Muslims not to be scared because of the Sharia, saying: "it only affects Moslems".

In readiness for today's ceremony, security has been strengthened in the ancient city.

Armoured tanks plied the streets yesterday, their sirens sending warning signals to would-be trouble-makers.

Security sources said more securitymen would be drafted in from the neighbouring states.

Some foreign journalists including those from AFP, VOA, Reuters and BBC, are already in the city.

Business has been bad for commercial banks as customers have been withdrawing money massively.

Women of easy virtue have vacated their hotels. Hotels had up till yesterday to close down.

Many non-indigenes and Christians have relocated with their families to Sabon Gari, the area, meant for resident-settlers where they think would be safe while waiting for the mounting tension to go down.

Nigeria's Kano state celebrates Sharia

An estimated crowd of more than one million Muslims attended

Hundreds of thousands of Nigerian Muslims have been celebrating the adoption of Islamic law or Sharia in the country's most populous northern state, Kano.

This is a momentous day in the history of Kano State. It is the day that Sharia is launched

Kano governor

People fainted in the heat and a local hospital said that two people had been killed in the crush.

Kano is the fourth and largest Nigerian state to adopt Sharia - which includes punishments such as amputation and flogging - and other states are likely to follow.

The issue has provoked fear among northern Nigeria's minority non-Muslim population and sparked violent unrest.

Kano is the fourth state to adopt Sharia

People began gathering from dawn, chanting Islamic slogans and the dusty streets around the parade ground were congested with excited young men.

Elderly residents of Kano said they had never seen such a large crowd.

Kano Governor Rabiu Kwankwaso said on Wednesday that although Sharia had been adopted, its actual implementation would not begin for several months whilst the necessary structures were put in place.

Troops

Supporters of Sharia say it will bring peace to Kano and force corrupt politicians to reform their ways, but there is anxiety among Christians.

The authorities have given assurances that Sharia will not apply to non-Muslims, but many Christians have already abandoned Kano city, which has a history of religious violence.

Sharia provisions

Based on the Koran

Provides an overall ethical framework for Muslims

Includes prayers, fasting, charity - as well as a legal code

Women should veil themselves

Physical punishment for crimes - including amputation, flogging, stoning

Troops and riot police have been deployed to strengthen security.

Hundreds of people died in clashes in February and May between Christians and Muslims in neighbouring Kaduna state after it attempted to introduce Sharia.

The Kano State government said last week it was implementing Sharia law in response to the demands of the people of the state.

But our correspondent says the sheer size of Kano's population, its commercial significance and its history of sectarian violence all make this a particularly sensitive moment in Nigeria's history.

Christian withdrawal

The Christian minority in the north consists largely of migrants from the Christian-dominated south.

Riots in Kaduna in February claimed more than 1,000 lives

Many shops and businesses are boarded up.

Banks said there had been a massive run on deposits because of withdrawals by customers leaving the state.

A spokesman for the independent committee that called for the introduction of Islamic law, Dr Datti Ahmed, accused anti-Islamic elements of spreading propaganda designed to frighten non-Muslims into leaving Kano.

He said the Sharia and national legal systems would operate side by side.

Nigerian Muslim leaders have said all along that the Islamic law would not affect the lives of the Christian minority.

Muslims are in the majority in northern states

But the BBC correspondent says the move is bound to be viewed with apprehension by the Nigerian federal government, which has been struggling to build unity in the huge and diverse country.

Ethnic and religious violence in Nigeria has increased since President Olusegun Obasanjo took office a year ago, ending 15 years of military dictatorship.

Islamic law is a broad code for living for all Muslims - including prayers, fasting and donations to the poor.

But it also includes a penal code, including stoning for adulterers and amputation for thieves.

In private matters, non-Muslims are exempt, but if they commit a public crime like theft, they too could be subject to it.

The many faces of Sharia

Several Nigerian states may follow Zamfara's lead

By BBC Analyst Michael Gallagher

When many non-Muslims think of the Sharia, they often conjure up an image of a public beheading or amputation.

However, Sharia differs enormously in its various implementations throughout the Islamic world.

Saudi Arabia practises one of the harshest forms of Sharia

Saudi Arabia has long practised a harsh form of the law, under which murderers and drug smugglers may be executed, thieves lose their hands, and adulterers may be stoned.

But as Nadeem Kasmi of the Al-Khoi Foundation in London explains, this does not offer a satisfactory understanding of the Sharia.

"Some offences require harsher penalties, but of course, it's not the

case that everyone in Saudi Arabia is walking around with one or other limb missing. Nor are they all in fear of being put to the cane or being lashed," he says.

Other Muslims add that Saudi Arabia's judges are the only branch of state over which the country's royal family has no control, as Sharia makes them fiercely independent of all but their religious obligations.

Yet, as Mr Kasmi explains, not all Muslim societies prevent politics from interfering with the purity of Sharia.

The late Iranian leader Ayatollah Khomeini introduced Islamic law in his country

"In Malaysia for example, you have a completely different situation.

"Although the majority there is Muslim, the society itself is very cosmopolitan.

"There are a lot of non-Muslims. And of course the country is economically very successful as well. So it has a completely different set of political social and economic dynamics, and they dictate a completely different interpretation of the law."

A code for living

Applied fully, the Sharia extends well beyond the sphere of criminal justice. It is a code for living that all Muslims should adhere to, including prayers, fasting and donations to the poor.

Women must cover themselves, and the sexes are frequently segregated. In effect, the Koran becomes a country's constitution.

Ahmed Sani, the governor of Zamfara, referring to this wider role of the Sharia, says: "There'll be no stealing or corruption, and people's mental and spiritual wellbeing is going to be encouraged."

But such wellbeing is, of course, open to argument.

Iran's Shi'ite Islamic revolution in 1979 led the way to a particular version of Sharia to which even many Muslims do not conform.

Women in Afghanistan must observe a strict dress code or face punishment

The "Hadd" penal code of unalterable punishments for certain crimes was firmly applied.

And the Sharia's call for "jihad" - loosely interpreted as Holy War, but which can also be used metaphorically to mean conversion of the unfaithful - was stressed. In Pakistan too, former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif called for Sharia to be made supreme law in 1998.

But to what extent is it - or has it ever been - properly enforced?

Not much, believes Nadeem Kasmi: "It's really questionable to what extent Sharia as a philosophy is actually applied.

"One could easily argue that in Pakistan - as in other places - it's applied rather selectively and that certain interpretations are used simply to gain political points on the part of some administrations.

"It's used willy-nilly, it's used ad-hoc. And so there is no systematic Sharia law, in the same way as Saudi Arabia or Iran, where there is a Sharia tradition."

Sharia has been most consistently applied in those societies without a significant non-Muslim population.

It was completely abandoned in Turkey as part of the country's latter-day secularisation.

Elsewhere, as in partly-Christian Sudan, it has been seen as divisive by those who do not want to conform to an Islamic lifestyle.

And as such, it remains a potent weapon in the hands of those populist Muslim leaders who want to steal a march on their opponents.

Zamfara PDP accuses governor of violating Sharia

>From Saxone Akhaine, Kaduna

SHARIA advocates may have to prove their opponents on the Islamic legal tenets wrong if allegations of misconduct against Zamfara State Governor, Ahmed Sani, are true.

The state's chapter of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) accused him yesterday of using the Islamic law to cover up questionable projects and maladministration, claiming that his self-acclaimed transparency was after all a ruse.

Led by its chairman Alhaji Ismaila Gusau, they alleged that Governor Sani was paying lip service to Sharia as government officials are constantly involved in contract inflation and projects that are of no benefit to the people.

At a press conference at the Kaduna State secretariat of the Nigeria Union of Journalists, Gusau alleged areas where the government has embarked on wasteful spendings as the construction of N300 million hotel in Abuja, N300 million expenditure on Alkali courts and another N200 million to buy and distribute vehicles, motor cycles, umra and hajj seats to individuals in the state.

He claimed that "the most unfortunate aspect of it all was that most of the beneficiaries were the free women and misfits in the society."

"We have been informed that radio equipment for the vehicles of Armed Robbery Control Operation Operation Zafi have been installed costing N58.6 million in addition to the N49.3 million security equipment installed in the offices and houses of the governor and deputy governor."

The party chieftain declared that "all the vehicles being used for the Operation Zafi were purchased and equipped by Col. J.B. Yakubu, former military administrator of the state. And what other security gadgets would one install in offices and houses of the governor and deputy governor beside those already installed by Yakubu, we sensed a foul play here."

He further stressed Sani is now working towards "dislodging our businessmen out of the old market without any adequate preparation to relocate them," adding that "the assertion by the state government that about N2 billion would be spent in the construction of a new market is to say the least a nightmare."

According to Gusau, "no serious government like the one we have, coupled with its unhealthy financial transactions with local banks and its lack of credit worthiness, can dream of such and it would be near impossible for such a government to raise that huge amount to construct a market," saying that it was the responsibility of local councils which the governor is usurping.

He said contrary to expectations that as the "home of Sharia where we expect the just and equitable tenets of Islamic law to be guiding principles the reverse is the case."

The party leader warned that "we shall henceforth expose any activities of the government that run counter to the basic tenets of Sharia."

Gusau lamented that "the basic tenets of Sharia have been violated by the very person who tagged himself as the champion of the entrenchment of Sharia in Zamfara State."

He warned against reduction of the state's workforce being planned by the government which he described as witch-hunting.

Date of Article: 06/20/2000

Topic: Deputy Governor Threatens to Resign over Sharia

Author: Luka Binniyat, Kaduna

Full Text of Article:

AGAINST the backdrop of possible adoption of Sharia by a majority of the Kaduna State House of Assembly, the state's Deputy Governor, Mr. Stephen Shekari, has threatened to resign his appointment if the adoption eventually comes through.

Only last week, the assemblymen had in a controversial decision adopted the report of its committee on Sharia which stated that over 70 per cent of the state indigenes favour the Islamic legal system. Christians in the House boycotted the deliberations.

The deputy governor, who was speaking in Zango Kataf Local Government Area of the state at a meeting convened at the instance of the state branch of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), stated that the executive arm of the state government still maintains stiff opposition to anyone who engages in any Sharia related issue "at least for now." "But if the House of Assembly tables the bill and gets two-third majority and the governor assents to the law," said Shekari, "I assure you that me and Christian members of the cabinet would all resign our official positions in protest," he told the gathering who included top clerics, retired generals, members of the National Assembly, among others from the southern part of Kaduna State.

Adding his voice, the State Commissioner for Agriculture, Mr. Baw Magaji, narrated how the Sharia issue started and the pressure exerted on Governor Ahmed Makarfi from Moslems especially those from the northern part of the state to expedite action on the adoption of Sharia in the state.

"It all started when we took our first tour of the state last year and

our entourage went to Zaria city,"

He said that the entourage was lured into an uncompleted stadium in Zaria by the chairman of Zaria Local Government Council under the pretext that the governor was going to commission something there."

"Suddenly," he continued "youngsters led by elderly mallams (Quranic teachers) appeared with placards chanting, 'Sharia only!, we want Sharia.'

Magaji explained that since then Moslem members of the state House of Assembly have been under intense pressure from their constituencies to pass a law authorising Sharia in Kaduna State which led to their forming a committee early this year culminating in the anti-Sharia fracas that engulfed Kaduna and Kachia last February.

"For all I know, the governor wants the Sharia issue suspended for now as advised by the meeting of the Northern Governors in March," Magaji said.

In a related development, a member of Kaduna State House of Assembly, Mr. Musa Shekarau, representing Lere Constituency, has raised alarm that the Moslem members of the House have formed a committee to be led by the Director of Legal Services of the House, Hajiya Uma Hikima, to visit Zamfara State with a view to studying to adopt the type of Sharia bill passed to the state.

Shekarau said that the commitment of the Moslem members of the House to resenting and passing the Sharia bill into law, was "fanatical."

"We, the Christian members have resolved to divide the Hose into two should any Sharia law be made, he told the gathering, adding that "We have no choice than to carve out a Christian House of Assembly with independent leadership."

Last week, all the local council chairmen from Southern Kaduna held a press conference and swore to declare Southern Kaduna a Christian State with Christian flags hoisted in all the settlements of the area should Sharia law be declared in Kaduna State. A move strongly backed by the youth wing of Southern Kaduna Peoples Union (SUKAPU).

The meeting was convened by Arch Bishop Peter Jatau, chairman, CAN, Northern States; Arch. Bishop Fearon, bishop of the Anglican Communion; Elder Saidu Dogo, secretary, CAN, Northern States and Kaduna, all local government chairmen of Kaduna State.

A communique would be issued soon on the outcome of the meeting, The Post Express learnt.

Northern Governors Misunderstand Sharia - Zaky Zaky
Vanguard Daily (Lagos)
June 18, 2000
By Leon Usigbe, Kaduna

Lagos - Following the adoption of the controversial Sharia by the

Kaduna State Government, Mallam Ibrahim Zak-Zaky, an Islamic cleric said in an interview with the Sunday Vanguard that the Northern State governors have taken the issue of Sharia as a fashion, but added that what they were adopting was not the actual Sharia.. Excerpts:

The report adopted by the Kaduna State House of Assembly was just a report. Do you now expect that a bill on Sharia will originate from the executive?

Well, a bill can be initiated even by individuals in the assembly. The only thing I know at the end of the day, they are going to have what they are going to call Sharia and I don't think they said full application. They didn't use the word 'full' at least. Well it is only after sometime people including Christians in the Southern part will come to realise there wouldn't be any full Sharia.

How do you see the recent adoption of a committee's report recommending the implementation of Sharia by the Kaduna State House of Assembly?

I don't think it's anything new. I have earlier said that it's very likely since it has become a fashion. All the northern states are likely to adopt Zamfara type of Sharia. Very likely and at the end of the day people will still demand for Sharia because it won't in the end be the actual Sharia.

In the light of what you are saying, how do you therefore advise the people of the State or the government regarding the move by government apparatus to implement Sharia that may not be real Sharia?

Since it has become a fashion, it will be very difficult for any state government in the North, the predominantly Muslim area now, to say it will not go the way Zamfara has gone. So, it's very likely that they will all go along that direction and later on people will now realise that there has not been any change. I think there has been a lot of misunderstanding on the part of Christians in particular who think that they are going to introduce anything new. I don't think they are introducing anything new because in Zamfara itself, nothing has happened.

Kano has just announced plan to publicly launch its own Sharia. What can you say about it?

I believe Sokoto has not done any ceremony. So, it all depends on the approach of each governor. Perhaps, also Kaduna may not launch it. The whole thing is that they are trying to satisfy the people, right. The Muslim people of these areas have been yearning for Islam and now the

governments like to have some measure of legitimacy where they would be accepted. That's why they are touching on those sensitive issues which are known to be liked by the people. Launching ceremony will be part of it, to publicise it, perhaps, make the government to be popular with the people and so on and so forth. All I know is that, I kept on telling you, it's very likely that all northern states will go the Zamfara way. Only after they have gone, people will now realise that there has not been any change.

Passion have been raised again in Kaduna State as a result of the latest action of the State House of Assembly. The people of Southern Kaduna appear to be spoiling for war. How can tension be reduced?

It seems to me that people who call themselves people of Southern part of Kaduna State are raising their own eye brow not necessarily on Sharia but age- long historical division between them and the people of the North. They ought to articulate their own views in a different platform altogether not to associate it with Sharia. This issue of Sharia is as far as I understand government business. And another thing is that they should take care in their utterances. I read some of their press releases. There are some unkind words against the Muslims and against Islam.

Ghadafi Behind Sharia In Kano
Vanguard Daily (Lagos)
June 18, 2000
By Nathaniel Ikyur, Kano

Lagos - Libyan leader, Col. Moummar Ghadaffi's offer to establish an Islamic university in Kano has been fingered as the major force behind the adoption of Sharia, the Islamic legal system in the state just as veteran politician, Alhaji Tanko Yakassai, said Sharia is for both Muslims and Christians.

He said the assurance by Muslim leaders to Christians on the controversial issue was only aimed at pacifying them to accept it when they rose against its introduction.

But spokesman of the Sharia Implementation Committee in Kano State, Barrister Muzzammil Sani Hanga, in a telephone chat told Sunday Vanguard that the launching of Sharia would create awareness among Muslims that the Islamic legal code had kicked off in the state.

Governor Rabu Musa Kwankwaso had announced Tuesday that the system would be publicly launched Wednesday June 21.

Investigations by our correspondent over the sudden twist in the controversy surrounding the implementation of the Islamic legal code by the state government showed that consistent pressure from the Libyan government through prominent Muslim leaders in the state compelled the governor to beat a retreat on his earlier stand on the issue.

The Libyan leader who had in 1995 during a visit to Kano perfected his strategies by floating the "World Islamic Call Society", an organisation financed by his government to co-ordinate the take off of the university as a step towards actualising his dreams of getting a hold on the country, particularly the northern part.

Sunday Vanguard learnt that it was part of the plots of the proponents of Sharia in the state that contract for the construction of the Islamic university which would be known as Ghaddafi Islamic University with \$300 million was signed between the World Islamic Call Society on behalf of the Libyan government and Messrs A.G. Ferraro in Kano Friday.

The signing of the contract which had been stalled in the past owing to conflicting interests was said to be a major breakthrough for the arrowheads of the adoption of the Islamic legal system in the state.

Mohamed Ali, Director of the Islamic organisation signed on behalf of his body while Messrs Costatno Ferrario signed on behalf of the construction firm. Armed with this document and the prospects of turning around the fortunes of Kano educationally, the Muslim leaders, Sunday Vanguard further gathered mounted more pressure on Governor Kwankwaso to change his approach to the Sharia issue so as not to allow the offer to build a befitting institution of repute in the state pass by.

Besides, the Sharia proponents argued that owing to the huge financial commitment by the North African government in the state, it would be unwise for the governor to reject such an offer by not accepting to adopt Sharia.

It was also learnt that the public launching of the Islamic code next Wednesday was to prove to the Libyan government that the state had fully agreed with its conditions of practising in full, the Muslim legal system. Blackmail and intimidating tactics also said to have been employed as weapons used by those in favour of adopting Sharia in the state against the state governor.

A source told Sunday Vanguard that the governor was painted in bad light before ordinary Muslims in the streets as being against Islam, a

situation which he claimed pitched the governor against the people.

To buttress his argument, the source said the alleged attack on the governor's residence at Gandu Albasa during the recent protest by workers against fuel hike were all aimed at arm-twisting him into doing their bidding.

In an interview with our correspondent, a Second Republic presidential adviser, Alhaji Tanko Yakassai declared that argument by some Muslim leaders that Sharia was only for Muslims was only a ploy to pacify non-Muslims into accepting the legal code because according to him, "Sharia has never been for Muslims alone. It is for everybody".

He then asked, "Supposing a Christian and a Muslim are caught stealing, does it make sense if only the Muslim is tried under Sharia and maybe amputated? I think they (Muslim leaders) are just trying to pacify the non-Muslims".

Yakassai also picked holes in the ceremony attached to the introduction, pointing out that, "although I am not against the introduction of Sharia, my quarrel is with the ceremony. To me, the ceremony is uncalled for. Sharia was launched over 1400 years ago by Prophet Mohammed and as such the launching at this time is not necessary". He said Sokoto State introduced Sharia without the ceremony in order to avoid hoodlums.

Although Barrister Muzzamil Sani Hanga, spokesman of the implementation committee denied knowledge of foreign link with the introduction of Sharia in Kano State. He, however, admitted that foreign nations had been invited and were expected to grace the occasion.

Hanga noted the importance of the two-hour ceremony saying, "it is necessary because it will tell Muslims in the state that Sharia is now here".

Meanwhile, scores of persons, particularly ladies suspected to be prostitutes continued to pack out of Kano as the June 20th deadline given to them by the state government expires on Tuesday.

Our correspondent observed Friday at Naibawa and Ungwan Uku Motor Park located along Zaria Road that most passengers were ladies with their luggage heading to various destinations, particularly the Middle Belt area and the eastern part of the country.

Do You Yahoo!?

Send instant messages with Yahoo! Messenger.

<http://im.yahoo.com/>

=====

----- Original Message -----

From: The Davidsons <nosagie@iafrica.com>

To: Ike Oguocha <oguocho@yahoo.com>; Wiebe Boer <mai_gona@hotmail.com>;
<ana-ga@egroups.com>

Sent: Thursday, March 16, 2000 6:54 AM

Subject: [ana-ga] Re: my two kobo on Sharia

> The price a nation pays for outright ignorance, or deliberate ignorance
can
> be very high. The Sharia issue is just one. If our courts are worth their
> pinch
> of salt, where are the SANs who could have unilaterally taken this issue
to
> the highest courts in our land. Anyway, it's an expensive learning curve.
> May
> the souls of all those who lost their lives rest in eternal peace.
>
> Inno
>
>
>> Wiebe:
>>
>> I think there's a lot of sense in your contribution.
>> But, you know, we are Nigerians. We are a people
>> of the moment. Single-issue humans. I hope that
>> ANA stays on the raging Sharia controversies
>> without taking sides.
>>
>> The introduction of Sharia as a state religion
>> in parts of northern Nigeria is a constitutional
>> challenge. This has been my opinion since Zamfara
>> first lit the light "of confusion". I was and I'm
>> still very amazed at the way many of us are looking
>> at the issue. Personally, I like the challenge
>> posed by this Sharia thing. I like the debates
>> it has generated. It helps me to understand the
>> mind and mentality of Nigerians much better as
>> we in the M2M prepare our manifestoes for the
>> year 2003.
>>
>> My only regrets though are the wastage of human
>> lives and properties that has trailed the introduction

> > of Sharia (or its planned introduction in other
> > places) and the apparent inability of those defending
> > Sharia to make very convincing arguments about what
> > they are doing. That Zamfara Governor of a man is
> > bag of confusion. I hate reading him defend Sharia.
> > I have not read any good legal arguments that will
> > sustain Sharia at the Supreme Court of Nigeria or
> > even the Federal Court of Appeal. The lazy political
> > arguments flying around that the Sharia law was
> > legally and democratically established does not
> > give any iota of support to its constitutionality.
> > I think many of the actors are yet to understand
> > that legality .ne. constitutionality. We have
> > seen many Acts or Laws passed by Provinces in
> > Canada or States in the US which were roundly
> > routed or demobilized at the Supreme Courts of
> > Canada and the US. Majority may carry the votes,
> > as we say in Nigeria, but does that make the
> > majority right? Does the fact that a law or an
> > Act of parliament was established by a majority
> > vote make it constitutional? Of course, NO! This
> > is one fact that has eluded the defenders of the
> > new Sharia law in Nigeria. They are quick to tell
> > you that in those states where Sharia law has been
> > established or signed into law that the state
> > assembly followed democratic/legal/constitutional
> > steps to pass the law. That, my friends, is not
> > the issue. The issue is about whether or not what
> > they did is consistent with Constitution of the
> > Federal Republic of Nigeria. Only courts of law,
> > and not politicians or religious fanatics on both
> > sides, will determine this. This is what has not
> > been tested. This is what ought to be tested.
> >
> > This brings me to your argument which seems
> > to project the notion of "Secularity" being
> > a Christian thing. I think that you are dead
> > wrong here. Secularity is the western equivalent
> > of separation of state from religion. The west
> > went "secular" in order to escape from the rigid
> > demands of a Bible christian life. To the best
> > of my knowledge and experience, that something
> > is western in nature does not in any way mean
> > it's christian too. I believe you know this
> > more than me. Unfortunately, many of those who
> > debate in favor of Sharia think this way. That

> > is where my interest in their debates ends. In
> > fact, to me, anything tagged "western" is
> > everywhere anti-christian. For example, a
> > strictly christian state won't debate gay
> > and abortion rights bills, not to talk about
> > passing them into laws. Are you getting my
> > drift.
> >
> > Let's get back to Sharia and ANA. I know that
> > I hold unpopular views in ANA. I enjoy being
> > on the other side of popular opinion. The
> > current ANA membership is tilted towards the
> > christian religion. So, expect some elements
> > bias when religious issues like Sharia crop
> > up. I know that there are many christians who
> > would have done worse than those guys in Zamfara,
> > Sokoto, Kebi, or Kano if given the chance. Yes,
> > Nigerian christians have many Zamfara governors
> > amongst them. A friend of mine recently told me
> > that he's been "Shariaed" in his home town Adazi,
> > in Anambra state. He was very furious at the way
> > his town treats non-Catholics or their interests.
> > The Rev. Father in his town runs the town as if
> > it's a church property. He's even more powerful
> > than the Igwe of their town. Can you imagine the
> > likeness?
> >
> > ANA should stay clear of any partisan religious
> > debates in Nigeria. ANA should play no role greater
> > than appealing for peace and understanding in
> > Nigeria. Taking up newspaper ads to attack Sharia
> > or volunteering to offset the legal bills of those
> > challenging the constitutionality of Sharia will
> > take us back to Abacha days. We don't want no more
> > wars in this Association. Christians in ANA shouldn't
> > hijack ANA for Christianity or use ANA to fight
> > Islam in Nigeria. We have to draw a distinctive
> > line on the ground between what we must do and
> > what we must not do. We have staretd again.
> >
> > Religion is a personal thing. I wonder why this
> > is yet to sink into the heads of many of us.
> > Religion is not and should not be made a national
> > thing, especially in a complex and explosive society
> > as Nigeria. Nigeria has stayed relatively peaceful
> > together for more than three decades without any

> > state religion. This is the kind of message ANA
> > should be preaching and not to allow herself to
> > be dragged into another unfruitful war in Nigeria.
> >
> > Wiebe, please allow me to disagree with you again.
> > You tend to say that "the Sharia issue can open
> > a door for debate about the role of religion in
> > African politics." I counter by saying that Nigeria
> > should not serve as the experimental guinea pig.
> > The cost is very high. Although Nigerians pretend
> > to be religious, the truth of the matter as far as
> > I'm concerned is that Nigerians, both christians
> > and moslems, pay lip service to their religions.
> > We pretend a lot. We are very immoral, unethical,
> > corrupt, and are without dominating sense of justice
> > or fairplay.
> >
> > In a country where millions are hungry and starving
> > to death, where millions are dying of malaria, aids,
> > and other preventable water-borne diseases, where
> > nothing that keeps life going works, what preoccupies
> > both the leaders and the led is religious showmanship
> > and grandstanding. Is something not wrong with a
> > people like this? Does any person serve religion
> > at a dinner table? Someone should tell those leaders
> > of ours at home that they should dump religion into
> > the Atlantic or Lake Chad and concentrate in making
> > life more meaningful to the Nigerian people. Right
> > now, life has no meaning to more than 95% of people
> > in Nigeria. Life has no shelter in Nigeria. Life
> > is gone from Nigeria. Religion won't put back life
> > into Nigerians. Good governance will.
> >
> > ANA should join in efforts, support efforts, or
> > initiate efforts that will put life back into
> > dilapidated Nigerians at home. To me, that's
> > what pleases God.
> >
> > Wiebe, see you again when when the constitutional
> > challenge of Sharia begins. That's what I have
> > been waiting for. That's democracy in action.
> >
> > Farewell
> >
> > Oguocha [retreating to his snow-harvesting job]
> >

>>
>> --- Wiebe Boer <mai_gona@hotmail.com> wrote:
>>> It does no good for Nigeria for an organization like
>>> ANA to come out being
>>> so hostile to Sharia law, especially when you
>>> consider that if we are
>>> representing Nigerians, then we should also
>>> represent the Muslim view even
>>> if that view is not well represented within this
>>> body.
>>>
>>> To the average Muslim, the so-called secular state
>>> system which governs
>>> Nigeria is a Christian state system since it comes
>>> from the West. Whether
>>> that is true or not is not the issue, because that
>>> is the perception. From
>>> that context, it would seem perfectly fair that
>>> Muslims should be allowed to
>>> have Sharia law if they want since Christians
>>> already have a Christian legal
>>> system in place. Contrary to what conspiracy
>>> theorists might think, I do
>>> not think that Sharia is an organized plot to
>>> destabilize Nigeria. It is
>>> the attempt by Muslims to come to terms with the
>>> fact that African
>>> governments have been unable to create state systems
>>> that really address the
>>> huge importance of religion in African life.
>>>
>>> If we look at it from this perspective, the Sharia
>>> issue can open a door for
>>> debate about the role of religion in African
>>> politics. All the hostile talk
>>> only makes the potential conflict worse. We should
>>> call for dialogue not
>>> revenge if we really want to find a way forward.
>>>
>>> Yours,
>>> Wiebe
>>>

Sharia group against plans to return Buhari

THE National Council for the Defence and Propagation of Sharia (NCDPS) has kicked against alleged moves to field the former speaker of the House of Representatives, Alhaji Salisu Buhari, to contest for re-election from the Nasarawa constituency in Kano state.

Addressing a press conference shortly after its executive council meeting held in Katsina at the weekend, the chairman of the council, Alhaji Aliyu Ibrahim, implored Muslims in the country to oppose the arrangement.

According to the council, Buhari's moral character was in question, and, as such, "it will be an abuse to the Muslim community for him to represent them in the house of representatives."

It said that Buhari would not only be representing the people of Nasarawa constituency, but he also would be representing Muslims in the national assembly, adding that "we should, therefore, have an upright person whose image has not been dented.

"If the qualities of leadership, as expressed in the Sharia, are to reflect in the Nigerian polity, then all these issues of campaign against corruption would not come about, because if you have god-fearing people as our rulers, the nation will progress," the council stressed.

Gombe residents urged to be security conscious

By Ben Ngwakwe

GOMBE- GOMBE State governor, Alhaji Abubakar Abu Hashidu, has again urged the people of the state to be security conscious to ensure continued peace and security among various groups in the state.

The governor made the appeal Thursday while separately addressing chairmen and councillors, district and village heads and religious leaders in Akko and Billiri local government areas in continuation of his tour of local government areas preaching the gospel of peaceful co-existence, security awareness and education.

He further told them to be organised and programme themselves on

security matters prevalent in their domains before inviting law enforcement agencies.

Governor Hashidu told the people to counter any challenge posed by a person or group of persons that threaten their lives and property, saying: "If there are individuals who are not conforming with the norms of your society, culture, people and religion, please call them and advise them."

The governor also implored the people to continue to live in peace, harmony and friendship with one another for the progress and development of the state.

In their remarks, the chairmen of Akko and Billiri local governments, Alhaji Ya'u Abdullahi Pindiga and Dr. Hama Abubakar respectively told the governor that their people are peace-loving and law-abiding and pledged to ensure continuous existence of peace and tranquillity among the people.

Also, the district head of Pindiga, Alhaji Mohammed Seyoyi and the Wamban Tangale, Alhaji Abdu Waziri commended the state government's efforts in the maintenance of peace and security in the state and assured to support such vigour toward peaceful co-existence among the diverse groups in the state.

=====

Nube Achebo NaijaNews Vanguard News
Tuesday, June 20, 2000

Kano launches Sharia tomorrow; drops Islamic code

L Return to Vanguard front page

By Nathaniel Ikyur

KANO - THE Islamic legal code will not come into operation immediately in Kano State when the state launches Sharia legal system tomorrow.

Chairman of the Council of Ulama in Kano, Sheikh Ibrahim Kabo who spoke at a well attended press conference through an interpreter listed non-availability of judges and courts as reasons behind the delay in the full implementation of the Islamic legal system.

Sheikh Kabo also dispelled insinuations that the law would exempt certain areas in the state perceived to be predominantly non-Muslims.

Vanguard also learnt that a detachment of anti-riot policemen have been deployed from Maiduguri, Bauchi, Katsina and Sokoto in a bid to complement efforts of the Kano State Police Command to forestall any breakdown of law and order during and after the launching ceremony.

Sheikh Kabo, flanked by other top Islamic scholars at the pre-Sharia launching press briefing stated that "launching the Sharia now does not expressly mean the commencement of operation. The launching, first of all is to clear ground for the full implementation of the Islamic code."

Besides, the Muslim leader said "right now, we don't have Sharia judges. Even courts that would be used for this purpose are not in place. But very soon, we will recruit them (judges) screen and train them for the purpose of administering justice."

On courts, Sheikh Kabo announced that "new courts will be constructed and we will rehabilitate some. That is why we will launch the programme and then later look into putting in place, facilities for the full implementation of Sharia in the state."

Although the Islamic scholar denied receiving financial aid from any foreign country, he could not give details how the entire Sharia project would be financed.

On threats against non-Muslims by some hoodlums since the announcement of the launching of Sharia in the state, Sheikh Kabo replied that "the absence of Sharia in the state is the cause of violence," assuring that his committee "has taken adequate measures to checkmate such hoodlums. And with this law (Sharia) in place now, we will rid Kano of violence because Islam does not preach violence."

Another member of the Islamic body and a member of the Kano Emirate Council Alhaji, Mahe Bashir Wali while shedding more light on the operations of the Islamic law dispelled fears of possible segregational application of the law when in full operation.

"If a rich man or a district head is caught committing theft, definitely his hand will be cut in accordance with the provisions of the Sharia."

=====

Pakistan denies supporting Sharia in Zamfara

By Ibiba Don Pedro

AS the authorities in Zamfara State push its agenda to Islamic governance, Pakistan, hitherto considered strong backer of the agenda, has denied such links.

Pakistani High Commissioner to Nigeria, Mr. Zafa Hilaly, said his country was not giving support in any form to Zamfara government's moves to entrench Islam as state religion.

"Contrary to report that I attended the launching last year, I was not even in Nigeria when it took place. I wouldn't in my capacity as representative of my country, as an individual, act that way, he told reporters yesterday.

Hilaly spoke at a forum on democracy organised by Journalists for Democratic Rights (JODER), at the International Press Centre (IPC), Ogba, Lagos.

JODER had organised the forum, according to its Chairman, Wale Adeoye, "to educate journalists and by implication, the Nigerian public on the issues involved in the Indo Pakistan conflict, the peace initiative of both countries and how (such) moves could be made to succeed," as a way of nurturing Nigerian democratic experiment.

However, what promised to be a robust debate on Kashmir, the region at the centre of the over half century old conflict between the two countries, turned out to be a one-sided delivery by the Pakistani High Commissioner as his Indian counterpart did not honour the invitation.

Officials at the Indian High Commission informed The Guardian that the envoy did not chicken out of the debate. "The first Secretary Mr. Nur stated that "we informed JODER that the High Commissioner will be unable to attend as he would be busy at the time. Also we are opposed to Pakistan's acts of terrorism. People are being killed. We also consider Kashmir a domestic issue and would not like to internationalize the issue."

On his part, the Pakistani High Commissioner delved into the conflict, noting that ultimate solution to the Kashmir crisis lies with the Kashmir people. "It is up to the Kashmir people to decide whether they want to be part of India or Pakistan. We will abide with the resolution of the Kashmir people. Pakistan does not rule free Kashmir which has

its own Prime Minister, National Assembly and Supreme Court. The only area where the laws of Pakistan apply in Kashmir is that we co-operate on defence and use the same currency."

On why his country was involved in the conflict and if the Kashmir people will be allowed to decide on independence from both India and Pakistan, Hilaly noted that over 100,000 Kashmir people have died in the last 11 years. They are our people. Pakistan and Kashmir are undistinguishable, that is why we say we cannot hold back."

Pakistan and India have fought two wars over the Kashmir territory of 18 million people since both countries gained independence from Britain in 1947.

====XXX

11 feared dead in fresh Kaduna clash

>From Akinjide Babalola and John Alechenu, Kaduna

SOLDIERS returned to Kaduna streets yesterday following renewed sectarian violence which claimed an estimated 11 lives (the police confirmed two) and left scores of others injured.

Although the exact cause of the clashes were hazy as of yesterday evening, it was established that the trouble began at Narayi/Barnawa market when a dispute broke out between some Hausa/Fulani youths and their Kaje counterparts. Some shops were looted and set ablaze.

News of the clashes spread to other parts of the city as youths, chanting Islamic slogans, stormed some streets, such as Ibrahim Taiwo Road and Ahmadu Bello Way, where they set ablaze parts of the First Baptist Church and a passing vehicle.

Mobile policemen armed with teargas cannisters who were earlier drafted to Narayi and Bamgwa reported that they were ill-equipped to handle the situation. Soldiers and Air Force personnel from military formations across the city were mobilised and armoured personnel carriers and armoured tanks headed for the trouble spot.

The renewed violence came exactly three months after the February 21 and 22 Sharia clashes in which scores of lives and property worth millions were lost.

At Katsina Roundabout at 11.00 a.m., Almajeris (Koranic school youths)

who were hauling stones at specific targets were chased by mobile policemen from the Mobile Barracks on Television Village Road. They joined their counterparts from elsewhere.

Soldiers and Air Force personnel quickly took over the security duties at the Command Guest House on WAFF Road and the Air Force Club on Rabah Road to prevent attacks on both facilities.

Police Commissioner Mohammed Shehu and the General Officer Commanding (GOC) 1 Division personally led their men to some areas they had deployed them to.

Speaking to reporters soon after returning from the trouble spots where calm had been restored, the police commissioner said: "Police findings revealed that the discovery of a body was at the centre of the dispute.

"Narayi people said the body belonged to them and went to take revenge. Few houses belonging to Hausas were torched and destroyed."

The trouble, according to the police boss, spread to Barnawa where he said "Barnawa Moslems launched an attack and a church was torched and some houses belonging to Christians were also torched. Rigasa and Tudun Wada were also affected and some houses were burnt."

Shehu also revealed that another body was found in Angwan Sanusi. He said that Christian youths aged between 19 and 21 years carried out the attack in Narayi. Some arrests were made but Shehu declined to disclose the number.

Hoodlums cashed in on the confusion to attack some stores spared during the last violence. They were, however, stopped by armed troops who quickly rounded up 50 of them. Those arrested were held around the premises of the Co-operative Bank opposite the Shiekh Abubakar Gumi Market.

Panic engulfed parts of the city a few weeks ago when rumours of an impending attack were freely circulated between residents of Barnawa and Narayi. Tension was further heightened, with the killing of a policeman after a Jumat (Friday) prayer in the city centre about two weeks ago.

Panic-stricken residents of the city are already trooping to military formations for safety. This is coming at a time when military authorities have given the marching orders to victims of the February crisis who took refuge in barracks to leave, following several measures aimed at resettling them by the government and relief agencies. The GOC

1 Mechanised Division had earlier in the day advised residents to stay calm and avoid trooping to the barracks.

In a swift reaction to the crisis, Moslem and Christian leaders from across the state who were in Kaduna for a meeting with the governor issued a joint press statement. It read: "The Kaduna State branches of the Jama'atu Nasril Islam and Christian Association of Nigeria observe with dismay the attempts by some bad elements within Kaduna metropolis to cause mischief and cause the breakdown of law and order under the pretext of religion. Our investigations have confirmed that the incident of today, Monday 22nd May, 2000, was caused by a few miscreants in Narayi and Barnawa and has nothing whatsoever to do with religion or tribe."

It added: "In fact, the unfortunate events of today broke out while the religious leaders in the state were holding a meeting with the executive governor. We condemn in the strongest terms any attempt to scuttle the regime of peace and stability the state currently enjoys. We further call on all Moslems and Christians in the state to shun rumours and expose their mongers and continue to stay calm in the pursuit of their legitimate businesses.

"Finally, we urge both the state and Federal Governments to take decisive action to identify, isolate and deal decisively with rumour mongers and all persons intent in destabilising the peace and security of the state."

The joint statement was signed by Alhaji Ja'afaru Makarfi and Mr. Saidu Dogo, Chairman of JAH and Secretary-General of CAN, Northern States.

In a separate statement signed by the Chief Press Secretary to the Governor, Mallam Lukman Musa, said the state government had declared its preparedness to deal with any situation that could jeopardise the unfettered peace and security in any part of the state.

In the evening when Alhaji Makarfi briefed reporters on the situation, he blamed "rumour mongers" and "those who had a hidden agenda" of trying to destroy the state by using baseless rumours aimed at causing chaos.

He said: "This is not a pleasant moment. You must be aware of what has been going on, particularly in the last one week. Unimaginable stories and rumours have been circulating and particularly it has to do with hostility between Narayi and Barnawa. Some rumours have been circulating that one community will attack the other and all the security agencies, government and other bodies have been involved to

get to the root of this and we could not pin-point where these rumours were coming from. The communities were talked to. We also could not identify the causes of these rumours."

The governor added: "As we were trying to deal with that as from Thursday, there were also rumours as you are all aware that I myself had even died as far back as Thursday. I have not even had headache in the past three months."

He went on: "What we have realised is that there is a calculated attempt by whatever means to confuse people to cause chaos. Today as we were meeting with the religious leaders from all across the state, Christians and Moslems, to discuss on these rumours and their dangers and how to deal with them before they could lead to the breakdown of law and order..

"Holding that meeting, we received the report of what was going on between Narayi and Barnawa. And the report was that at Narayi village they saw a body and since there was rumours being peddled that Barnawa would attack Narayi or Narayi would attack Barnawa, Narayi assumed that it was Barnawa that attacked them and killed someone. So, they started taking action and when they started taking action, Narayi also started taking action. And as you can see, it has spilled to some parts of Sabon Tasha, Kakuri, Makera, particularly around those areas.

Makarfi assured that his administration had fully mobilised security forces to contain the situation since calm had been restored.

His words: "We have already mobilised forces, security forces, as a first measure. Further reinforcements are being currently mobilised to take full charge of the areas of tension, also to go round in the areas that is of peace to make sure that nothing happens to allow a spillover to those areas."

He hinted that a security council meeting would decide whether or not a curfew was required.

Makarfi said the crisis had no religious or ethnic colouration as religious leaders were at a meeting with him in the Government House when the trouble began.

"What I want you to understand is that, if religious leaders, both Christians and Moslems that cut across ethnic barriers can converge in Kaduna to talk about peace and then you get a breakdown of law and order somewhere, then it cannot be ethnic, it cannot be religious; there is probably a bigger agenda, he said.

Makarfi appealed for calm, saying the situation had been brought under control.

The security council meeting was still on last night.

Makarfi's personal assistant, Abdullahi Saheed, told The Comet that the governor, the police commissioner, director of the State Security Service (SSS), heads of military formations and other top officials were at the meeting.

=====

xxx

05/22/2000

Dow Jones International News

(Copyright (c) 2000, Dow Jones & Company, Inc.)

KADUNA, Nigeria (AP)--Christians and Muslims battled with clubs, stones and machetes in the streets of this northern Nigerian city on Monday, burning homes and places of worship.

Witnesses said up to five people were killed, although that figure couldn't be independently confirmed.

The fighting was a revival of bitter religious bloodletting touched off in Kaduna earlier this year by calls for Islamic law, or sharia, in some Nigerian states. Up to 2,000 died in the earlier fighting, many of them in Kaduna.

Soldiers were hurriedly sent into the streets on Monday. Police commissioner Mohammed Shehu said the trouble began after some residents in the predominantly Christian neighborhood of Narayi blamed Muslims for an earlier murder of a local man.

They attacked and burned homes of Muslims who quickly launched reprisals. Several Christian churches were torched.

Many distraught civilians took refuge in police and army barracks. Shops and offices were quickly closed.

The ethnic fighting is fueled not only by calls for sharia, but also by Nigeria's web of ethnic disputes and the north's waning power since democratic rule was instituted last year.

Southern Nigeria is predominantly Christian, and northern Nigeria is

overwhelmingly Muslim. Northerners dominate Nigeria's military, and wielded immense power during the 15 years of army rule, which ended last year with President Olusegun Obasanjo's election.

Muslim law prohibits drinking alcohol, and under some interpretations, calls for separate schools and public transportation for men and women.

11 feared dead in fresh Kaduna clash

>From Akinjide Babalola and John Alechenu, Kaduna

SOLDIERS returned to Kaduna streets yesterday following renewed sectarian violence which claimed an estimated 11 lives (the police confirmed two) and left scores of others injured.

Although the exact cause of the clashes were hazy as of yesterday evening, it was established that the trouble began at Narayi/Barnawa market when a dispute broke out between some Hausa/Fulani youths and their Kaje counterparts. Some shops were looted and set ablaze.

News of the clashes spread to other parts of the city as youths, chanting Islamic slogans, stormed some streets, such as Ibrahim Taiwo Road and Ahmadu Bello Way, where they set ablaze parts of the First Baptist Church and a passing vehicle.

Mobile policemen armed with teargas cannisters who were earlier drafted to Narayi and Bamgwa reported that they were ill-equipped to handle the situation. Soldiers and Air Force personnel from military formations across the city were mobilised and armoured personnel carriers and armoured tanks headed for the trouble spot.

The renewed violence came exactly three months after the February 21 and 22 Sharia clashes in which scores of lives and property worth millions were lost.

At Katsina Roundabout at 11.00 a.m., Almajeris (Koranic school youths) who were hauling stones at specific targets were chased by mobile policemen from the Mobile Barracks on Television Village Road. They joined their counterparts from elsewhere.

Soldiers and Air Force personnel quickly took over the security duties at the Command Guest House on WAFF Road and the Air Force Club on Rabah Road to prevent attacks on both facilities.

Police Commissioner Mohammed Shehu and the General Officer Commanding

(GOC) 1 Division personally led their men to some areas they had deployed them to.

Speaking to reporters soon after returning from the trouble spots where calm had been restored, the police commissioner said: "Police findings revealed that the discovery of a body was at the centre of the dispute.

"Narayi people said the body belonged to them and went to take revenge. Few houses belonging to Hausas were torched and destroyed."

The trouble, according to the police boss, spread to Barnawa where he said "Barnawa Moslems launched an attack and a church was torched and some houses belonging to Christians were also torched. Rigasa and Tudun Wada were also affected and some houses were burnt."

Shehu also revealed that another body was found in Angwan Sanusi. He said that Christian youths aged between 19 and 21 years carried out the attack in Narayi. Some arrests were made but Shehu declined to disclose the number.

Hoodlums cashed in on the confusion to attack some stores spared during the last violence. They were, however, stopped by armed troops who quickly rounded up 50 of them. Those arrested were held around the premises of the Co-operative Bank opposite the Shiekh Abubakar Gumi Market.

Panic engulfed parts of the city a few weeks ago when rumours of an impending attack were freely circulated between residents of Barnawa and Narayi. Tension was further heightened, with the killing of a policeman after a Jumat (Friday) prayer in the city centre about two weeks ago.

Panic-stricken residents of the city are already trooping to military formations for safety. This is coming at a time when military authorities have given the marching orders to victims of the February crisis who took refuge in barracks to leave, following several measures aimed at resettling them by the government and relief agencies. The GOC 1 Mechanised Division had earlier in the day advised residents to stay calm and avoid trooping to the barracks.

In a swift reaction to the crisis, Moslem and Christian leaders from across the state who were in Kaduna for a meeting with the governor issued a joint press statement. It read: "The Kaduna State branches of the Jama'atu Nasril Islam and Christian Association of Nigeria observe with dismay the attempts by some bad elements within Kaduna metropolis to cause mischief and cause the breakdown of law and order under the

pretext of religion. Our investigations have confirmed that the incident of today, Monday 22nd May, 2000, was caused by a few miscreants in Narayi and Barnawa and has nothing whatsoever to do with religion or tribe."

It added: "In fact, the unfortunate events of today broke out while the religious leaders in the state were holding a meeting with the executive governor. We condemn in the strongest terms any attempt to scuttle the regime of peace and stability the state currently enjoys. We further call on all Moslems and Christians in the state to shun rumours and expose their mongers and continue to stay calm in the pursuit of their legitimate businesses.

"Finally, we urge both the state and Federal Governments to take decisive action to identify, isolate and deal decisively with rumour mongers and all persons intent in destabilising the peace and security of the state."

The joint statement was signed by Alhaji Ja'afaru Makarfi and Mr. Saidu Dogo, Chairman of JAH and Secretary-General of CAN, Northern States.

In a separate statement signed by the Chief Press Secretary to the Governor, Mallam Lukman Musa, said the state government had declared its preparedness to deal with any situation that could jeopardise the unfettered peace and security in any part of the state.

In the evening when Alhaji Makarfi briefed reporters on the situation, he blamed "rumour mongers" and "those who had a hidden agenda" of trying to destroy the state by using baseless rumours aimed at causing chaos.

He said: "This is not a pleasant moment. You must be aware of what has been going on, particularly in the last one week. Unimaginable stories and rumours have been circulating and particularly it has to do with hostility between Narayi and Barnawa. Some rumours have been circulating that one community will attack the other and all the security agencies, government and other bodies have been involved to get to the root of this and we could not pin-point where these rumours were coming from. The communities were talked to. We also could not identify the causes of these rumours."

The governor added: "As we were trying to deal with that as from Thursday, there were also rumours as you are all aware that I myself had even died as far back as Thursday. I have not even had headache in the past three months."

He went on: "What we have realised is that there is a calculated attempt by whatever means to confuse people to cause chaos. Today as we were meeting with the religious leaders from all across the state, Christians and Moslems, to discuss on these rumours and their dangers and how to deal with them before they could lead to the breakdown of law and order..

"Holding that meeting, we received the report of what was going on between Narayi and Barnawa. And the report was that at Narayi village they saw a body and since there was rumours being peddled that Barnawa would attack Narayi or Narayi would attack Barnawa, Narayi assumed that it was Barnawa that attacked them and killed someone. So, they started taking action and when they started taking action, Narayi also started taking action. And as you can see, it has spilled to some parts of Sabon Tasha, Kakuri, Makera, particularly around those areas.

Makarfi assured that his administration had fully mobilised security forces to contain the situation since calm had been restored.

His words: "We have already mobilised forces, security forces, as a first measure. Further reinforcements are being currently mobilised to take full charge of the areas of tension, also to go round in the areas that is of peace to make sure that nothing happens to allow a spillover to those areas."

He hinted that a security council meeting would decide whether or not a curfew was required.

Makarfi said the crisis had no religious or ethnic colouration as religious leaders were at a meeting with him in the Government House when the trouble began.

"What I want you to understand is that, if religious leaders, both Christians and Moslems that cut across ethnic barriers can converge in Kaduna to talk about peace and then you get a breakdown of law and order somewhere, then it cannot be ethnic, it cannot be religious; there is probably a bigger agenda, he said.

Makarfi appealed for calm, saying the situation had been brought under control.

The security council meeting was still on last night.

Makarfi's personal assistant, Abdullahi Saheed, told The Comet that the governor, the police commissioner, director of the State Security Service (SSS), heads of military formations and other top officials

were at the meeting.

xxx

Nubi Achebo NaijaNews May 23 2000

Religious Clashes In Nigeria's Kaduna Leave 11 Dead

08:04 ET

Dow Jones International News

(Copyright (c) 2000, Dow Jones & Company, Inc.)

LAGOS (AP)--Security forces patrolled Tuesday in the northern Nigerian city of Kaduna, where the death toll from renewed religious clashes increased to 11, according to news reports.

The streets remained calm Tuesday as soldiers and antiriot police maintained a heavy presence.

Fighting broke out Monday after some residents in the predominantly Christian neighborhood of Narayi blamed Muslims for an earlier killing of a local man, police commissioner Mohammed Shehu said. They attacked and burned homes of Muslims who quickly launched reprisals.

At least 11 people were killed, the Lagos Guardian newspaper reported Tuesday. Two churches and ten homes were also set on fire. On Monday evening, police had said that only one person was killed.

The fighting was a revival of bitter religious bloodletting touched off in Kaduna in March by plans to implement Islamic law, or sharia, in some northern states. Up to 2,000 died in the earlier fighting, many of them in Kaduna.

While the fighting in March was triggered by the calls for sharia, it was also linked to Nigeria's web of ethnic disputes and the north's waning power since democratic rule was instituted last year.

Southern Nigeria is predominantly Christian, and northern Nigeria is overwhelmingly Muslim. Northerners dominate Nigeria's military, and wielded immense power during the 15 years of army rule, which ended last year with President Olusegun Obasanjo's election.

NIGERIA: PRESS-DIGEST - Nigeria - May 23.

06:03 ET
 Reuters English News Service
 (C) Reuters Limited 2000.

LAGOS, May 23 (Reuters) - These are the leading stories in the Nigerian press on Tuesday. Reuters has not verified these stories and does not vouch for their accuracy.

GUARDIAN

- Violence in northern city of Kaduna claimes 11 lives; Christian Council of Nigeria and supreme Moslem body say in joint statement that clash is not religious.

=====xxx

Newswatch Volume 31, No. 15 Updated April 19, 2000

Searching For Peace

Governors, emirs and Islamic scholars hold separate meetings in Kaduna over Sharia controversy.

By Tunde Asaju, Kaduna

The Sharia controversy which has evoked so much passion and bloodletting in the country recently, appears to be moving towards a political solution. Two separate high-powered meetings were held in Kaduna last week, to find a lasting solution to the problems created by the introduction of Sharia legal system in the northern states.

The Fatwa Committee of Jamaatu Nasril Islam, JNI, at its meeting held in Kaduna last Monday, constituted 30-man committee to examine all the issues concerning the Sharia and file its report within 30 days. The 30-man committee comprising eminent Islamic jurists and scholars has been mandated, "to conduct researches and hold discussions with a view to reaching a consensus on the two issues for proper guidance of the Muslim Ummah and the state on Sharia legal code and the sighting of the moon". According to a communique issued by the JNI and released to the press last Tuesday; the Ibrahim Shariff Saleh committee would present its report to Muhammadu Maccido, Sultan of Sokoto and president of JNI, early next month. The 19 northern governors who simultaneously held a similar meeting in Kaduna last Monday, also resolved to set up a committee, made up of Muslim and Christian leaders, to discuss all the

controversial issues on the Sharia legal system. The governors said their decision was based on the differences between 1979 and 1999 constitutions, on the matter.

Said the governors: "Realising the differences between the 1979 and 1999 constitutions of the Federal Republic of Nigeria with regards to Sharia law in Nigeria, we have resolved to dialogue on those aspects of Sharia not included in the panel code and arrive at a consensus for adoption. This was the procedure adopted by Ahmadu Bello late Sardauna of Sokoto. This is without prejudice to a declaration on the matter by the Supreme Court".

They said bringing of Muslim and Christian leaders into the committee was to allow for ventilation of ideas in the hope of reaching a consensus on the implementation of the law. Surprisingly, the two bodies were silent on the fate of Baba Bello Karadugarke Jungeli, a cow thief whose hand was amputated March 22, in Zamfara State. The decisions of both the governors and the JNI were seen as a face-saving move for President Olusegun Obasanjo to wriggle out of the claws of the Sharia. After denying two requests made by the 19 northern governors to meet and make a pronouncement on the issue, the federal government last week granted permit for the meeting to hold in Kaduna. Newswatch gathered that the permit followed assurances given by Ahmed Mohammed Makarfi, Kaduna State governor, who insisted that he was capable of hosting the meeting and the resolve of Dalhatu Attahiru Bafarawa, the Sokoto State governor, to chair it.

In addition, the Obasanjo administration succeeded in enlisting the services of Maccido, to call a meeting of all notable Islamic scholars, known as Fatwa to deliberate on the Sharia and how to implement it without causing unnecessary friction or heightening the already tense atmosphere in most parts of the country. Both meetings were held in Kaduna simultaneously. The governors met at Hassan Usman Katsina house while the learned Islamic scholars met at the Arewa house both along Ali Akilu road in the Kawo area of Kaduna. Both meetings started early in the morning and lasted less than five hours.

By 10.00 a.m. April 3, all the governors had assembled at the venue of the meeting. Before their arrival, rumours were rife that the JNI meeting would issue a communiqué condemning Ahmed Sani, the Zamfara State governor. He had violated a controversial agreement allegedly reached between the federal government and the northern governors to halt further implementation of the Sharia and limit it to the provisions already enshrined in the penal code. On March 22, Sani caused a stir when he went ahead with the amputation of the hand of Jangedi, in Zamfara State. That action caused a lot of negative

reactions from people opposed to the implementation of the Sharia but Sani insisted he had broken no law.

As he took his seat among his colleagues, Sani betrayed no emotion and shrugged off journalists who clamoured for an interview with him. Most of the other governors equally refused to say anything about the Sharia. In order to shield the main motive of the meetings, both groups brought the Sharia issue to the last item of the agenda. While the governors listed repositioning of the NNDC and the Bank of the North as well as desert encroachment topmost on the meetings agenda, the Sharia issue was an addendum

For the Fatwa meeting, Muhammadu Maccido named the discrepancy in the observance of religious holidays as the main thrust of the meeting and put Sharia on the seventh paragraph of his speech. Both the Sultan and Bafarawa refused to answer questions on the issues raised in their addresses. Both groups went into a closed session after the opening.

Newswatch gathered that the governors exchanged hot words on what was supposed to be the import of the agreement announced by Atiku Abubakar, vice president, after the last council of states meeting in Abuja. While some said that Atiku was right and that Sani had breached the agreement, Sani and most of his supporters insisted that what was agreed on was that those who had started implementing the Sharia should continue while others should wait until a better understanding is reached at both state and federal levels. The governors agreed that they should try and guard against making statements that would give the media screaming headlines the next day.

As for the Fatwa group, as soon as the opening session ended, Abdulhameed Babatunde, the group's spokesman, told reporters that they were free to go and that he would send the communiqué later in the day. A few minutes after noon, the learned mullahs took their break and reconvened later. No communiqué came out until Tuesday morning. The three-page communiqué signed by Abdulkadir Orire, secretary general of the JNI and Grand Khadi of Kwara State, made a vague reference to the Sharia issue.

Said the communiqué: "After thorough discussion, the meeting resolved to put in place a 30-member committee of eminent jurists and scholars under the chairmanship of Sheikh Ibrahim Sheriff Saleh, to conduct researches and discussions with a view to reaching a consensus (ij'ma) on the two issue for proper guidance of the Muslim Ummah and the state". The committee, which is to be chaired by Maccido would report back to the Fatwa after 30 days. Newswatch gathered that the Fatwa agreed that there were already lapses in the constitution as to the

implementation of Sharia. Inside sources told Newswatch that the clerics argued that if the law gives the governor of a state power to sign death warrants for the execution of condemned criminals, it ought also to give him the right to carry out the kind of amputation carried on in Zamfara.

The Fatwa resolved to tell the emirs to go back home and mobilise their citizens to join the army especially the officer corps. While the meeting was going on, Arisekola Alao, the Aare Musulumi of Yorubaland and one of the few advocates of the Sharia from the southwest was accused by two of his colleagues including the Emir of Ilorin of not doing enough mobilisation for the Sharia in their part of the country. Alao replied that they were trying but that most people were opposed to it. Newswatch gathered that the presidency has fixed a date for a meeting with both the governors and the emirs of northern states. The meeting is part of the fence-mending measures being adopted by the government to cool down tempers

====xxx

Nuhu Achebo NaijaNews
Saturday, April 15 , 2000

God will avenge Jangebe's cries - Okogie

By Lawrene Adenipekun

I must say that the political situation in the country is really disturbing. One would have thought that, after the slavery we all went through under military regimes, things would move faster than what we are presently experiencing.

Both Christians and Moslems who are citizens of Nigeria should see themselves as one. For it is God who ordained our being together in this country. God is not a foolish father. He wants peace, love and joy for each one of us. Unfortunately, disunity crept in because some areas are more endowed with resources than the others. So to make Nigeria a better place to live, we have to look inwards. We should ask ourselves 'am I really doing unto others what I want others to do unto me'? You don't have to say "my Qur'an says this, my Bible says this".

Bello Buba Jangebe has continued to be in the news since March 22 when, on the orders of a Shari'a court backed by the assent of Governor Ahmed Sani, his right wrist was amputated for allegedly stealing a cow valued at N10,000.

In this interview held in his office at the Catholic Secretariat, on

Lagos Island, Dr. Anthony Olubunmi Okogie, the Catholic Archbishop of Lagos and former President of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) reacts to the amputation. In his characteristic manner, he also assesses the political situation in the country and offers advice on how socio-economic and political modernization can be attained in Nigeria.

ACCORDING to Okogie: "It is wrong for Governor Ahmed Sani of Zamfara State to have amputated the wrist of Jangebe for stealing. It is the law of God that nobody should kill. There are different ways of killing. One of them is destroying what you didn't create. Nobody has the right to destroy what you didn't create. The cries of the amputee will be received in heaven for vengeance. The Zamfara State Government may say that is the provision of Shari'a legal system. But there is no law that is greater than God. Even the conscience of the man who did the amputation as well as that of the governor would prick. Will they be happy if that is to be done to them. The prison yard is there. Couldn't they put him in prison? Why should you amputate somebody because he stole. Let those who did this thing on the excuse of Shari'a law examine their conscience. They've done a worst thing. It is bad.

"Those advocating the implementation of Shari'a law have now seen that it is not feasible. Look at what is happening all over the country. Christians that the Muslims attacked in Kaduna were not even prepared. But see the number of deaths on both sides. What if they were prepared? There would have been less casualties on the side of the Christians. The unprepared Christians seized the weapons which the Moslem fanatics were wielding and used them to launch counter attack.

"Nigeria is a multi-religious nation. In Zamfara State, there are many Christians and how many Christians do you want to stop from praying. Even in Saudi Arabia, Christians still worship there secretly, although they may not come out publicly. They still carry their Bibles here and there and still say their prayers. Some even pray in the public, some pray in the hospitals.

====

Orkar coup, a popular uprising, says Nyiam

from Hendrix Oliomogbe, Benin

THE April 1990 military putsh led by late Major Gideon Orkar has been described as a pro-democracy uprising and not a coup.

Lt-Col. Anthony Nyiam, the alleged mastermind of the failed coup said

in Benin, the Edo State capital, that the factor that necessitated the coup attempt needed to be addressed through a Sovereign National Conference.

He defended the coup broadcast in which some states in the far North were exercised from the country, saying he is more convinced now that the action was proper.

He said: "We saw it coming excision. After the Mamman Vatsa's coup attempt, I travelled with Abacha within the country to meet traditional rulers and Army Commanders to speak to soldiers. Anytime we went to the Hausa areas in the North, we were given Hausa and Islamic regalia and if you didn't wear it, they would not be happy with you. It got to a stage that if you were in the Army, you have to speak Hausa. What I am saying in effect was that, there was a gradual acculturation of other people who have superior culture. We saw it coming. So I am not surprised that sharia came.

Nyiam argued that sharia is being used by some people who feel that they are no longer in a position to loot the national treasury to cause crisis.

=====xxx

Saturday April 15 2000

Nubi Achebo NaijaNews

Confederation call not to split Nigeria, says Kalu

>From Aminu Abubakar, Kano and Okei Onyemah, Katsina

ABIA State Governor Orji Uzo Kalu has defended the easterners' agitation for confederation, saying it was not aimed at dividing the nation but to ensure the entrenchment of true federalism.

The Ezeigbo of Katsina, Chief Hilary Chukwuma Okonkwo also said the call was an expression of frustration brought about by the killing of the Igbo and looting of their property in times of crises.

Kalu spoke at the presidential lounge of the Government House in Kano where he was a guest of honour during the turbaning of Governor Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso's father as the district head of Kwankwaso by the Emir of Kano, Alhaji Ado Bayero.

He said the misinterpretation of the clamour for confederation was by mischief-makers who meant the country no good.

His words: "The call for confederation does not mean Nigeria should break up. We are running a unitary system where power comes from one source. The aim of confederation is to allow states to form and execute policies that will favour the people and reflect their culture. Confederation is only a value-added true federalism."

Kalu condemned any move to divide the country under whatever pretext, saying he would fight to maintain its unity and continued existence.

"I can never call for this country to break-up. It is only people who are mischievous that are thinking that my clamour for confederation is meant to divide the country. I will fight as a soldier to keep the unity and continued existence of this country," he said.

The governor described the call for a Sovereign National Conference (SNC) by a section of the country as illegal. In his view, it is only the National Assembly that is the democratically established forum to represent all geopolitical segments of the nation.

"Sovereign National Conference is illegal, very illegal since there is the National Assembly in place. So, nobody can call for Sovereign National Conference where there are both houses of assembly in place," Kalu said.

He saw no harm in the implementation of the Sharia in predominantly Moslem states as long as the unity of the country was put into consideration.

"As far as I am concerned, religion is something of the mind; I have nothing against the Sharia. Everybody can practice what they want to practise as long as there is peace," the governor said.

"I cannot ask people not to practise their religion- it will be wrong for me to do that. What I am saying is that they should remember the unity of the country while doing so, which is very important," Kalu said.

The Ezeigbo Katsina told The Comet that he was happy that the eastern governors had soft-pedalled in pressing their demand.

But he insisted that the government must begin to pay adequate compensation to the Igbo whenever they fall victims of crisis to check the impression that they had become endangered species in their own land.

The Eze Okonkwo said: "The Igbos have remained peaceful in the face of grave provocation. The fact that we are found in every nook and cranny of this country doing legitimate business shows our confidence in one indivisible Nigeria."

He stated that Katsina State was finalising arrangements to pay compensation to victims of the last riot in August last year, during which hotels were allegedly burnt and property looted.

The community leader, who regretted that the undue emphasis being placed on state of origin in the country had become a source of problem to Nigeria's unity, said a deliberate federal policy must be made to reverse the trend.

"I have lived in Katsina for over 30 years. My children were all born here and if the laws of Nigeria should be enforced, my family, like many other Igbo families, will qualify as indigenes," he said.

Okonkwo praised the Emir of Katsina, Alhaji Muhammadu Usman Kabir, for prevailing on his people to forestall the possible repeat of the last Kaduna carnage in Katsina.

Acknowledging that the tempo of business has reduced in Katsina following the mass flight of Igbos to the East as a result of the Kaduna riots, he noted that such homeward movement had abated and expressed the optimism that most of those who fled the town would return to their businesses after the Easter break.

Reacting to the recent ban on sale and consumption of alcohol in most parts of the state, the Ezeigbo said the development was adversely affecting the social activities of the Igbo in the state, maintaining that "as a culturally oriented people, the observance of such ceremonies like the New Yam Festival, marriages, child naming, etc., requires the pouring of libation and alcohol consumption for their validity more or less."

While calling on the Igbo community in Katsina to continue to be peace loving and law-abiding, he assured that the Eze cabinet in conjunction with the Igbo Welfare Association in the state would work assiduously to promote the interests of all Igbos in the State.

He called on the Federal Government to find a permanent solution to the lingering ethnic and religious riots in the country by going to the roots of the problem and meting out appropriate punishments to their instigators.

=====
Nubi Achebo NaijaNews
April 13, 2000 Volume 31, No. 14

Walking a Tightrope

President Olusegun Obasanjo devises various war strategies to forestall a break-up of Nigeria through agitation for confederation

By Olu Ojewale

As an army general, President Olusegun Obasanjo knows about all the rudiments of going into a battle. Even now as a civilian and president, he is leaving nothing to chance in his efforts to douse the conflagration of the clamour for confederation as a system of government in Nigeria.

In the last three weeks, Newswatch investigation shows, Obasanjo has adopted a four-pronged strategy to win what Aso Rock sources described as the war to keep Nigeria one. First in the president's agenda is the use of prominent individuals and high-ranking government officials to appeal to proponents of the confederation to soft-pedal on the idea.

Newswatch was reliably informed that ever since some southern leaders especially the five south-east governors started the demand for a confederacy, there has been panic in the presidency. Obasanjo is said to be worried that the agitation could have a contagious effect on their south-south counterparts. For this reason, Newswatch learnt, the president hurriedly dispatched Tony Anenih, minister of works and housing, to the south-south zone to stop any bandwagon effect of the call. The minister was to reach out to individuals, governments and social groups in his campaign. He was briefed to emphasise on the inherent dangers posed by the adoption of confederation.

From all indications, it is apparent that the demand for confederation was a fallout of the killings in the riots in Kaduna and Sokoto between February 27 and March 6, over the proposed introduction of Sharia in both states. More than 600 people were reportedly killed in Kaduna and only a couple was reported in Sokoto. Nevertheless the apparent arrogance displayed by the Ahmed Sani administration in Zamfara State by going ahead to amputate the right arm of Bello Garki Jangebi, who was convicted of stealing a cow March 22, seems to have hardened the position of some proponents of confederation.

Achike Udenwa, governor of Imo State, has expressed grave concern for

the continued implementation of the Sharia law in the country. He said in an interview with Newswatch: "I am very disturbed by the way they are going about it. It shows that they are insensitive to the situation. I know the vice president, Atiku Abubakar did quite a lot. He showed a lot of understanding, trying to impress on them the need to consider other sections of Nigeria if we are to be one country. It is regrettable that advocates of Sharia do not seem to understand that Nigeria is a secular nation."

"What does that tell you?," the governor asked. He continued: "It shows that all is not well yet. We are only appealing to them to please see reason why Sharia should be suspended for us to look at the best way forward and safeguard the territorial integrity of this country." Given the present circumstance, the Igbo, he said had no option but to ask for confederation.

The general thinking in the country, however, is that the question of confederation would not have arisen now if not for the Sharia conflict in the north. Said the governor: "The issue of Sharia is something that would have been nipped in the bud. They flew a kite with Zamfara (which announced its decision to introduce Sharia October 27, last year) and the nation did not react. When the nation did not react, they knew that the field was very open, so others followed suit, culminating in the Kaduna riot." He said if the Igbo had not been attacked, there would not have been any reprisals in the east nothing would have happened to non-indigenes in the Igboland.

Udenwa insisted that the Igbo were merely asking for a constitutional review to accommodate confederacy as a means of governance in Nigeria. "We did not say it will be achieved by force of arms or by any other thing other than by a constitutional process," said the governor.

The governor pointed out that the confederal issue was their own part of recommendation to the constitutional Review Committee going round the country on the aspects that people want changes in the constitution.

Chinwoke Mbadinuju, governor of Anambra State, insists that confederation is the only way by which the nation's existence could be guaranteed. He said contrary to fears in some quarters that it would lead to disintegration, the arrangement would enhance the nation's unity.

"The call for confederation is not a call for dismembering the country and neither is it a call to disorganise it. Rather, confederation means living together with clear recognition of our differences and the

uniqueness of each group in the union."

NOTES See at xxxx at bottom of file

=====
=====xxx

From: Nubi Achebo On Behalf Of Nubi Achebo

Sent: Tuesday, April 04, 2000 9:52 AM

To: Naija-news

Subject: [Naija-news] Newswire

Northern Nigerian leaders soft-pedal on sharia. By John Chiahemmen 06:14 ET
Reuters English News Service (c) Reuters Limited 2000.

LAGOS, April 4 (Reuters) - Local governors in northern Nigeria have agreed to set up a joint Moslem-Christian committee to try to end weeks of bloodshed over the adoption of Islamic sharia law by some states in the region.

The decision by governors of the 19 states of the largely Islamic north on Monday marked a major step towards defusing the worst crisis Nigeria has faced since civil war over breakaway Biafra some 30 years ago.

"We have resolved to constitute a committee made up of Moslem and Christian leaders to hold a dialogue on those aspects of sharia not included in the penal code and arrive at a consensus for adoption," said a communique issued after the talks in the northern city of Kaduna and published in full by Nigerian media on Tuesday.

Sharia family law has been in existence in northern Nigeria since before independence from Britain in 1960. But Christians are opposed to some aspects of the law, arguing that they are stricter than the Nigerian penal code.

While opponents argue that sharia violates Nigeria's constitutional status as a secular state, supporters of sharia cite their constitutional right to freedom of religion and insist the law will not be applied to non-Moslems.

SHARIA RIOTS KILL HUNDREDS

Tension has gripped the vast northern region since the predominantly Moslem and rural state of Zamfara announced last year it would observe strict sharia law. A Zamfara Moslem man had his hand amputated for theft last month in the first real application of the code.

Other sharia penal sanctions include death for adultery.

Fears that the more cosmopolitan state of Kaduna was planning to embrace sharia sparked street protests by Christians in February which led to bloody clashes with Moslems.

Hundreds of people died in Kaduna in fighting that devastated whole sections of the city.

Violence spread to the east as hundreds of northern Moslem immigrants in the largely Christian and ethnic Ibo heartland died in reprisal killings.

The Kaduna violence led to growing calls for a confederal structure and pressure for the convening of a "sovereign national conference" to decide future relations among Nigeria's ethnic groups.

"We uphold the Federal structure of Nigeria and condemn the call for a Sovereign National Conference in its entirety," said the communique following the governors' meeting.

"We reaffirm our total support to the Federal Government under the leadership of President Olusegun Obasanjo," it added.

It said the decision of the governors would not prejudice an eventual declaration by the Supreme Court on the constitutional right of states to adopt sharia law.

The statement gave no indication that pro-sharia states would suspend the application of the law.

Nevertheless the resolution of the governors would be a major boost to Obasanjo, who has faced one crisis after another since taking office last May at the end of 15 years of military dictatorship.

Obasanjo's supporters say the sharia crisis and widespread unrest which has killed more than 1,000 people since May is being fomented by powerful Nigerians who lost out with the return of democracy.

Ban on alcohol, prostitution in Kano to be "flexible" : spokesman
04/04/2000 Agence France-Presse (Copyright 2000)

KANO, Nigeria, April 4 (AFP) - A ban on prostitution, gambling and alcohol announced in the northern Nigerian city of Kano will be "flexible" to allow for the city's cosmopolitan nature, a local government spokesman said Tuesday.

The Kano State government on Monday announced the ban after a meeting between Kano State Deputy Governor Abdullahi Umar Ganduje and community leaders. Ganduje's spokesman Mohammed Garba told the ban would be introduced "very soon".

He said the move was part of a drive by the government of the state that is home to northern Nigeria's largest city Kano, to "curb social problems".

"This is not a religious issue. It is a social issue," he said.

However, acknowledging differences between Muslim and Christian communities living in the city, the ban on the sale and consumption of alcohol would only apply in Muslim majority areas and not in hotels, he said.

"Kano is a mini-Nigeria where you have people from all communities living together. It is a cosmopolitan city. We have to be flexible," Garba said.

The ban would be enforced by existing law courts, not by special Islamic law courts, he said.

Kano State government still intends to introduce Islamic law, or Sharia, but in a "flexible" way, he said.

"Our Sharia will be totally different from the Sharia in Zamfara," he said, referring to another northern Nigerian state which has recently adopted the strict code and on March 22 amputated the hand of a man found guilty of stealing an ox.

Tensions over the attempts by several northern Nigerian states to introduce Sharia spilled over into religious riots in February and early March in which more than 1,000 people were killed.

Nigerian Muslim state bans prostitution, alcohol 04/04/2000 Agence France-Presse (Copyright 2000)

KANO, Nigeria, April 4 (AFP) - Nigeria's northern Kano state on Monday banned prostitution, the sale or consumption of alcohol and gambling in a move seen by analysts as a prelude to the adoption of Islamic Sharia law.

The decision to impose the ban on the state's mostly Muslim population followed a meeting between state deputy governor Abdullahi Umar Ganduje, leaders of the Christian Association of Nigeria, community leaders and the

Council of Youths, an official communique said.

The communique said that in view of the "alarming" spread of HIV/ AIDS in the state, there was an urgent need for the state government to ban prostitution "as no religion or code of ethics supports this vice."

During the meeting, which lasted for about four hours, video film on the spread of HIV/AIDS in the state was shown to participants, followed by a lecture on the disease.

The ban on the sale and consumption of alcohol and drugs was a bid to curb the social problems they create, said the text, while the ban on gambling was a response to growing fraud.

During the meeting, some participants pleaded with the state government to defer the implementation of the ban order until tension generated by recent unrest in neighbouring Kaduna and some parts of southeastern Nigeria was diffused, a source close to the meeting said.

The period of deferment could also be used by government to embark on an extensive enlightenment campaign against these vices, the participants said, according to the source.

They also called for a phased implementation of the ban, but the deputy governor rejected the suggestion.

A law to back up the ban will soon be enacted, the communique said. Kano city, capital of the state of the same name, is Nigeria's second largest commercial centre after Lagos.

Last month, more than 1,000 people were killed in bloody clashes between Christians and Muslims in Kaduna and some parts of Christian-dominated southeastern states following protests against the Islamic law in Kaduna.

In January the northwest Zamfara state became the first Nigerian state to implement Sharia in criminal matters.

LAGOS, April 4 (Reuters) - These are the leading stories in the Nigerian press on Tuesday. Reuters has not verified these stories and does not vouch for their accuracy.

DAILY TIMES

- * Governors of 19 northern states to set up committee comprising Christians and Moslems to review the controversial Islamic sharia law.
- * At least 12 dead in communal clashes in southeast Anambra state.

=====
=====xxx

----- Original Message -----

From: The Davidsons <nosagie@iafrica.com>

To: Ike Oguocha <oguocho@yahoo.com>; Wiebe Boer <mai_gona@hotmail.com>;
<ana-ga@egroups.com>

Sent: Thursday, March 16, 2000 6:54 AM

Subject: [ana-ga] Re: my two kobo on Sharia

- > The price a nation pays for outright ignorance, or deliberate ignorance can
- > be very high. The Sharia issue is just one. If our courts are worth their
- > pinch
- > of salt, where are the SANs who could have unilaterally taken this issue to
- > the highest courts in our land. Anyway, it's an expensive learning curve.
- > May
- > the souls of all those who lost their lives rest in eternal peace.
- >
- > Inno
- >
- >
- > > Wiebe:
- > >
- > > I think there's a lot of sense in your contribution.
- > > But, you know, we are Nigerians. We are a people
- > > of the moment. Single-issue humans. I hope that
- > > ANA stays on the raging Sharia controversies
- > > without taking sides.
- > >
- > > The introduction of Sharia as a state religion
- > > in parts of northern Nigeria is a constitutional
- > > challenge. This has been my opinion since Zamfara
- > > first lit the light "of confusion". I was and I'm
- > > still very amazed at the way many of us are looking
- > > at the issue. Personally, I like the challenge

> > posed by this Sharia thing. I like the debates
> > it has generated. It helps me to understand the
> > mind and mentality of Nigerians much better as
> > we in the M2M prepare our manifestoes for the
> > year 2003.
> >
> > My only regrets though are the wastage of human
> > lives and properties that has trailed the introduction
> > of Sharia (or its planned introduction in other
> > places) and the apparent inability of those defending
> > Sharia to make very convincing arguments about what
> > they are doing. That Zamfara Governor of a man is
> > bag of confusion. I hate reading him defend Sharia.
> > I have not read any good legal arguments that will
> > sustain Sharia at the Supreme Court of Nigeria or
> > even the Federal Court of Appeal. The lazy political
> > arguments flying around that the Sharia law was
> > legally and democratically established does not
> > give any iota of support to its constitutionality.
> > I think many of the actors are yet to understand
> > that legality .ne. constitutionality. We have
> > seen many Acts or Laws passed by Provinces in
> > Canada or States in the US which were roundly
> > routed or demobilized at the Supreme Courts of
> > Canada and the US. Majority may carry the votes,
> > as we say in Nigeria, but does that make the
> > majority right? Does the fact that a law or an
> > Act of parliament was established by a majority
> > vote make it constitutional? Of course, NO! This
> > is one fact that has eluded the defenders of the
> > new Sharia law in Nigeria. They are quick to tell
> > you that in those states where Sharia law has been
> > established or signed into law that the state
> > assembly followed democratic/legal/constitutional
> > steps to pass the law. That, my friends, is not
> > the issue. The issue is about whether or not what
> > they did is consistent with Constitution of the
> > Federal Republic of Nigeria. Only courts of law,
> > and not politicians or religious fanatics on both
> > sides, will determine this. This is what has not
> > been tested. This is what ought to be tested.
> >
> > This brings me to your argument which seems
> > to project the notion of "Secularity" being
> > a Christian thing. I think that you are dead
> > wrong here. Secularity is the western equivalent

> > of separation of state from religion. The west
> > went "secular" in order to escape from the rigid
> > demands of a Bible christian life. To the best
> > of my knowledge and experience, that something
> > is western in nature does not in any way mean
> > it's christian too. I believe you know this
> > more than me. Unfortunately, many of those who
> > debate in favor of Sharia think this way. That
> > is where my interest in their debates ends. In
> > fact, to me, anything tagged "western" is
> > everywhere anti-christian. For example, a
> > strictly christian state won't debate gay
> > and abortion rights bills, not to talk about
> > passing them into laws. Are you getting my
> > drift.
> >
> > Let's get back to Sharia and ANA. I know that
> > I hold unpopular views in ANA. I enjoy being
> > on the other side of popular opinion. The
> > current ANA membership is tilted towards the
> > christian religion. So, expect some elements
> > bias when religious issues like Sharia crop
> > up. I know that there are many christians who
> > would have done worse than those guys in Zamfara,
> > Sokoto, Kebi, or Kano if given the chance. Yes,
> > Nigerian christians have many Zamfara governors
> > amongst them. A friend of mine recently told me
> > that he's been "Shariaed" in his home town Adazi,
> > in Anambra state. He was very furious at the way
> > his town treats non-Catholics or their interests.
> > The Rev. Father in his town runs the town as if
> > it's a church property. He's even more powerful
> > than the Igwe of their town. Can you imagine the
> > likeness?
> >
> > ANA should stay clear of any partisan religious
> > debates in Nigeria. ANA should play no role greater
> > than appealing for peace and understanding in
> > Nigeria. Taking up newspaper ads to attack Sharia
> > or volunteering to offset the legal bills of those
> > challenging the constitutionality of Sharia will
> > take us back to Abacha days. We don't want no more
> > wars in this Association. Christians in ANA shouldn't
> > hijack ANA for Christianity or use ANA to fight
> > Islam in Nigeria. We have to draw a distinctive
> > line on the ground between what we must do and

> > what we must not do. We have started again.
 > >
 > > Religion is a personal thing. I wonder why this
 > > is yet to sink into the heads of many of us.
 > > Religion is not and should not be made a national
 > > thing, especially in a complex and explosive society
 > > as Nigeria. Nigeria has stayed relatively peaceful
 > > together for more than three decades without any
 > > state religion. This is the kind of message ANA
 > > should be preaching and not to allow herself to
 > > be dragged into another unfruitful war in Nigeria.
 > >
 > > Wiebe, please allow me to disagree with you again.
 > > You tend to say that "the Sharia issue can open
 > > a door for debate about the role of religion in
 > > African politics." I counter by saying that Nigeria
 > > should not serve as the experimental guinea pig.
 > > The cost is very high. Although Nigerians pretend
 > > to be religious, the truth of the matter as far as
 > > I'm concerned is that Nigerians, both Christians
 > > and Muslims, pay lip service to their religions.
 > > We pretend a lot. We are very immoral, unethical,
 > > corrupt, and are without dominating sense of justice
 > > or fairplay.
 > >
 > > In a country where millions are hungry and starving
 > > to death, where millions are dying of malaria, AIDS,
 > > and other preventable water-borne diseases, where
 > > nothing that keeps life going works, what preoccupies
 > > both the leaders and the led is religious showmanship
 > > and grandstanding. Is something not wrong with a
 > > people like this? Does any person serve religion
 > > at a dinner table? Someone should tell those leaders
 > > of ours at home that they should dump religion into
 > > the Atlantic or Lake Chad and concentrate in making
 > > life more meaningful to the Nigerian people. Right
 > > now, life has no meaning to more than 95% of people
 > > in Nigeria. Life has no shelter in Nigeria. Life
 > > is gone from Nigeria. Religion won't put back life
 > > into Nigerians. Good governance will.
 > >
 > > ANA should join in efforts, support efforts, or
 > > initiate efforts that will put life back into
 > > dilapidated Nigerians at home. To me, that's
 > > what pleases God.
 > >

>> Wiebe, see you again when when the constitutional
>> challenge of Sharia begins. That's what I have
>> been waiting for. That's democracy in action.
>>
>> Farewell
>>
>> Oguocha [retreating to his snow-harvesting job]
>>
>>
>> --- Wiebe Boer <mai_gona@hotmail.com> wrote:
>>> It does no good for Nigeria for an organization like
>>> ANA to come out being
>>> so hostile to Sharia law, especially when you
>>> consider that if we are
>>> representing Nigerians, then we should also
>>> represent the Muslim view even
>>> if that view is not well represented within this
>>> body.
>>>
>>> To the average Muslim, the so-called secular state
>>> system which governs
>>> Nigeria is a Christian state system since it comes
>>> from the West. Whether
>>> that is true or not is not the issue, because that
>>> is the perception. From
>>> that context, it would seem perfectly fair that
>>> Muslims should be allowed to
>>> have Sharia law if they want since Christians
>>> already have a Christian legal
>>> system in place. Contrary to what conspiracy
>>> theorists might think, I do
>>> not think that Sharia is an organized plot to
>>> destabilize Nigeria. It is
>>> the attempt by Muslims to come to terms with the
>>> fact that African
>>> governments have been unable to create state systems
>>> that really address the
>>> huge importance of religion in African life.
>>>
>>> If we look at it from this perspective, the Sharia
>>> issue can open a door for
>>> debate about the role of religion in African
>>> politics. All the hostile talk
>>> only makes the potential conflict worse. We should
>>> call for dialogue not
>>> revenge if we really want to find a way forward.

>>>
 >>> Yours,
 >>> Wiebe
 >>>
 >>>

=====xxx

Subj: Religion Violence Speech
 Date: 3/20/00 9:17:17 AM Pacific Standard Time
 From: mccaind@unijos.edu.ng (Danny McCain)
 To: RonRice7@aol.com

Ron,
 Greetings.

Thanks a lot for sending out the religion violence email a couple of weeks ago. Our email system is up and going. However, here is another smaller little follow-up of that piece. It is an extemporaneous speech I made to the students of the religious studies department. Read it and if you think it is something that the people who read the first piece might be interested in, go ahead and send this out. If you don't think that it is worth cluttering up the email boxes, you know what to do with it.

Thanks for your willingness to do this for me.

Grace and Peace!

Danny

PS: Things are reasonably quiet right now. However, there are many rumors floating around. One which was reported in the Tell of this week says that some Northerners had plotted a major offensive against any southerners in the North last Friday which would have been devastating. All roads to the South would have been blocked. A major propaganda piece was going to be published on the same day in one of the national newspapers which would say, "Easterners rise up and kill 2000 Hausas." The headlines of the paper were already printed and published in the magazine. However, the plot was uncovered and thwarted. Also, a group of Niger indigenes were found camping just north of Jos a week or so ago and, after interrogation, confessed that they were sent there to kill and destroy. One thing is almost totally certain. The whole crisis was deliberately provoked by people for political ends. It was a conscience attempt to destabilize or at least embarrass the government. The most sinister rumor is that the wealthy Northern Muslims sparked the crisis with the hopes that the government would send in the army and kill a lot of the Muslim "mercenaries" (people from Niger and these almajari beggar children and other unemployed people who hang around the market) who had been brought in for the crisis. This would make the people of the North unhappy with the government and vulnerable to other kinds of religious manipulation. So we believe that somehow God is protecting us through all of this and that, in the end, God will be glorified.

A SPEECH TO CHRISTIAN AND MUSLIM STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF
JOS, MARCH 10,
2000
BY DR. DANNY MCCAIN

Two days ago, one of my students gave me an invitation to attend a welcome ceremony for the new students entering the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Jos. In our department we have degrees in both Christian studies and Islamic Studies. The meeting was supposed to start at 10:00 this morning and our head of department had agreed that we would have a lecture free period during that time. Unfortunately, I could not be there for the whole programme because I had to attend and speak at a conference of the Christian Religious Knowledge teachers of Plateau State. I told the president of the Religious Studies Students Association (RSSA), the sponsoring body, that I would try to come but would be late.

The programme was nearly over by the time I got there around 12:30 PM. There were about 150 students present. I came in and sat on the back row but was quickly spotted by one of the student leaders. A lecturer can never sit on the back row of an African function. I was then taken to the high table and sat next to the HOD (head of department). The HOD was making his speech at the time I got there. I was brought a soft drink and some small fried bread type of refreshments.

Ever since my student had informed me of the meeting and invited me to the ceremony, I had been thinking that I would like to address all of our religious studies students. It would give me an opportunity to say a few things that I had been thinking about and wanted to say to someone. So as I was being given my refreshments I told one of the students in charge that I would like to say a few words. This is always in order at these functions. There is usually a section called "advices" in the program where senior people can advice the junior ones. I think we were already past that point in the program when I got there but the RSSA president explained to the group that he was inserting one more item in the program. He then welcomed me and gave me the opportunity to address the students. The following is a summary of the extemporaneous speech I made to them.

Good morning, students of the department of religious studies. I am happy to be with you on this special occasion. There are two important things that I would like to say to you.

First, I believe that the department of religious studies is the most important department in this university. Do you want to know why I believe this? I believe this because what you are learning and what you will be doing and teaching in the future is related to the moral foundation of this country (applause).

We hear a lot about infrastructure building in Nigeria these days and we need a lot of work on our infrastructure. As you can see the electricity is not functioning in this building right now. However, I did not come to this country to work on that kind of infrastructure. I have no interest in being a part of the department of geology and mining. They do important work related to the natural resources in this country but that is not for me. I am not interested in being part of the law faculty. They specialize in getting crooks out of prison (laughter). I am not interested in being part of the medical school although they are doing much to help alleviate suffering and pain in this country. Many of these people are working on things related to infrastructure. However, you who are studying religious studies are working on the moral infrastructure, and, as far as I am concerned, that is the most important kind of infrastructure.

If we build a very strong nation with very good roads and a good water system and other things but ignore the moral infrastructure, the whole thing will eventually collapse. An example of this is the former Soviet Union. This was a nation, which officially professed atheism. However, if there is no God, then there are no moral absolutes. And if there are no moral absolutes, every man will do that which is right in his own eyes. This will lead to chaos and the nation will eventually collapse as did the Soviet Union.

I do not believe I have to tell you that the morality of a nation comes from its religion. Therefore, if we do not teach our people their religion, they will not have a good foundation upon which to build their morals.

I have heard what was said a few minutes ago about the graduates of our department going out to become bank officers and customs officials. That may happen at times but my prayer is that all of you will go out from this place and be teachers of the Word of God. You should be proud that God has entrusted to you the privilege of having a greater understanding of sacred scriptures and teaching this knowledge to those who do not know it as well as you.

And, now, there is a second thing I would like to talk to you about. How many of you are Christians? (About two-thirds of the students raised their hands.) I am sorry to say that during the last two weeks, the founder of your religion, Jesus Christ, has been greatly disgraced and humiliated. People have gone out and, in the name of Jesus Christ, have killed Muslims and destroyed their places of worship. This is a disgrace to all who call themselves Christians. Jesus Christ was abundantly clear about these issues. He taught us to love one another and he taught us not to use violence in our lives. When Christians in Kaduna and Aba and Owerri took to the streets and killed Muslims, they were not acting as Christians. The Kaduna crisis was a very sad day for Christianity.

And, now, how many of you are Muslims? (about one-third raised their hands. It was quite obvious from their clothes who they were). With all due respect, during the last two weeks, the prophet Mohammed and the religion he taught have been greatly disgraced and abused. People in the name of the prophet and in the name of Allah have taken to the streets to kill Christians and burn churches. I don't know as much about the Holy Koran as I do about the Bible but my Muslim friends tell me that Islam also teaches against violence of the kind we witnessed two weeks ago in Kaduna. How could good Muslims go out and kill people who are following other sacred scriptures? This is not what your sacred scriptures teach nor is this what has been practiced by serious Muslims. Your religion has been greatly disgraced by this small radical group of people who have perpetuated this violence.

This is a shame for all of us. Both of our religions teach peace. Both of us claim to worship God. Both of us study sacred scriptures. And then our people turn and fight and kill and burn and destroy. This is a very sad day in Nigeria.

And, now I want to be very practical and say two important things. First, you have the rare privilege of studying here at the University of Jos in a department of religious studies. You will observe that we do not have a department of Christian studies and a department of Islamic studies but a department of religious studies. I believe that God has allowed you to be here so that not only can you learn about your religion but also you can learn about the other religion. We are not like those people who killed each other in Kaduna and Aba. We are people who love and understand each other.

I am calling on you, the students in this department, do not separate yourselves from one another in your little religious groups. I am encouraging you to make friends with those who are of a different religion. You Muslims need to become friends with the Christians and you Christians need to become friends with the Muslims. You need more occasions like this where you can come together and have fellowship. You need to visit one another in your hostels and attend other social occasions together. God has given you the privilege of becoming friends with those of another religion. Is that a sin? Does Islam teach that is wrong to become friends with Christians? (the Muslims all shook their heads from side to side).

You are not always going to be students in this university. One of these days, some of you are going to be on those big seats in Abuja and other places. Perhaps one of you will be the head of state and one of you will become the minister of education (smattering of applause). And when you get on those big seats and there are crises similar to what we have witnessed, you will have friends on the other side of the religious fence and you will know enough to be able to steer us away from what we have experienced during

these past two weeks. I pray that your generation will be more capable of avoiding these crises and listening to one another than this present generation of leaders has been (applause).

And there is one more thing. When you leave this place, you are also going to have a big responsibility. Whether you like it or not, you are no longer a laymen in your religion. You Christians may not be a deacon or an elder in your church and you Muslims may not be a mallam or a sheik. However, you know more about your religion than the average person does. And for the rest of your lives, wherever you go, whether you are working in a bank or doing something else, your friends and relatives are going to be looking to you for information about their religion. And it will be your responsibility to tell your friends and relatives the truth about what your religion teaches. Jesus Christ said, "To whom much is given, much is expected." God has given all of you the wonderful opportunity to study your religion. The question is: What are you going to do with that knowledge?

Although you know I am a Christian, I do not speak to you as a Christian or as a Muslim today. I speak to you as your elder brother and I plead with you that you not allow this violence to touch you and the Department of Religious Studies. I call on the leaders of this organization to create some kind of rally or march or other public demonstration in which Muslims and Christians march around this campus, arm in arm, declaring to everyone on this campus that there is no religious crisis at the University of Jos. It is my prayer that the kind of relationship we have here at the University of Jos can be a good model for the whole country.

In fact, there should be a spirit of cooperation between us. Do you see those papers lying on that table? I brought those with me to give to Dr. Yahaya. He and I have been working together on a faith-based AIDS awareness programme for the state government. You probably know that AIDS is killing us here in Africa. And you also know that the activities that spread AIDS are considered wrong by both Christians and Muslims. Though we might disagree on some things, we Christians and Muslims have no disagreement on how we should practice our sexuality. The Bible and the Koran both teach us that we should abstain from sexuality before we marry. And the Bible and Koran both teach us that we should not commit adultery after we are married. Is that not true? (Both Muslims and Christians nodded their heads or responded verbally that it was true.) Dr. Yahaya and I are working together on this project but I don't think that the cooperation in this department should be limited to the academic staff. I believe that God would be pleased if all of us loved one another and cooperated together in those areas where we can cooperate.

I thank you for the privilege of saying these few words to you and I pray that we will all take them seriously. God bless you all (much applause).

He jolted Nigerians and the international community when, after duly participating in the National Council of States deliberations on the nation's security situation, February 29, he affirmed the right of Governors of pro-Sharia states to adopt the Islamic legal code as state law.

"Since it is the hands of the Moslems that they will amputate in the event of conviction, and we are the ones that will be stoned to death, we have agreed since it is our religion," he asserted in defence of the pro-Sharia governors.

Buhari argued that "Government has a duty to protect Moslems wherever they are, rather than deploying soldiers and policemen to the street to go and shoot them, because what they have done was in line with the constitution of Nigeria. They have not done anything illegal."

And, as if out of spite for Government, he contradicted the claim by President Olusegun Obasanjo and his vice, Atiku Abubakar, that the council of states resolved to have adoption of Sharia suspended: "It was not true that the council had agreed that the Sharia be suspended," he said.

The spirit was different - less abrasive and more propitiatory - when the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Muhammadu Maccido, spoke on the subject. Nuances and emphasis of the speech creatively interpreted by newsmen, Nigerians sensed "a tacit endorsement of the National Council of States' stand on the vexed Sharia issue".

"The Emirs and Chiefs of the 19 Northern states have met with the President and Vice President at the State House, Abuja, this morning," the Sultan declared, adding "the discussion was thorough, frank and comprehensive".

According to him, "the meeting viewed the events of the last few days with grave concern. They noted that peace and stability is crucial to any progress and socio-economic development in any nation.

"They therefore resolved to work together to restore normalcy and provide confidence in the unity and brotherhood among the people of this nation".

The tenor was readily comprehensible: the confidence of Nigerians in the unity and brotherhood of all (countrymen), gratuitously shaken in the recurring anarchy in different parts of the country, is to be

restored and reinforced.

So, no mass exodus from Kaduna, Zamfara, Sokoto, Kano, Owerri, Lagos, and elsewhere. And no threats (as from South-East governors) of reassessing anyone's faith in the corporate existence of Nigeria.

A classic display of paternalistic sagacity: the monarchs were able to provide the ree-assurance Nigerians desperately needed to force ahead as "a people united," with a "a future assured". Muhammadu Buhari, apparently of a different disposition, was thus upsaged.

An enigma - at least to less discerning minds - the immediate past executive chairman of the intervention agency, the Petroleum (Special) Trust Fund (PTF) has become.

Only last January at the Presidential Lodge, Sokoto, he spoke as the statesman that some Nigerians were wont to argue he is. He fielded questions ranging from ethnic clashes, religious intolerance to economic management.

"On the negative side is the issue of tribal, religious intolerance which have reared their ugly heads," he enumerated, observing that "these are more frightening than the economic issues".

"These tribal and religious intolerance are very dangerous," the former Head of State emphasised," stating "I wish the government will work harder to stop them in the interest of our country's survival".

"Difficult it really is to reconcile his denunciation of governments .sensitive response to the anarchy in Kaduna with his analysis and suggestions as cited in the last two paragraphs.

True, his March 3 arguments tallied with those of ex-President Shehu Shagari, who declared the National Council of States' resolutions as unconstitutional, and Shagari's erstwhile Transport Minister, Alhaji Umaru Dikko's, urging Sharia-minded Governors to March on with their quest irrespective of the potential dangers.

Buhari even found allies in the council of Ulama in Kano State who ordered opponents of the Islamic legal system to quit the area immediately, if they were not prepared to accept its implementation.

But Major-General Buhari - and not the Ulama as such - has a moral obligation to defend the constitution. Necessarily, he ought to have ruminated over the argument of a former Chief Justice of Nigeria, Justice Mohammed Bello - a Moslem who stated a fortnight ago that

full adoption of Sharia was unconstitutional and fraught with danger.

A non-governmental organisation, Northern Youths for Democracy and Justice (NYDJ), which reacted to the outpourings of the pro-Sharia Northerners, did not bother about the Ummah (or Ulama) - not even with Shehu Shagari, whose romance with late General Sani Abacha speaks volumes.

The group joined issues with the former PTF boss whom it said had "always professed to be a nationalist who sees the whole Nigeria as his constituency".

In a statement signed by the NGO's coordinator and director of publicity, Malams Umar Fari and Yunana Sokoto, respectively, the body said Buhari's remarks have "forced a change of opinion (perception) of him".

According to them, "we suspect the character of nationalism he (General Buhari) is showing now by refusing to accommodate other views apart from his own political, tribal and religious expression".

The character of Buhari's nationalism is indeed a worth while subject for study by students of contemporary political history. Think of Buhari, the gallant military strongman who exhorted Nigerians to realise they have no other country and must work together to salvage the one that is truly theirs.

And then the Buhari of the draconian, retroactive decrees. The Miscellaneous Offences Tribunals and the conviction and execution of Batholomew Owoh and company for drug-related offences committed before Buhari promulgated his decree.

Buhari's public officer (Protection Against false Accusation) Decree No. 4 of 1984, as interpreted by a former Chief Judge of Lagos State, late Justice Adetunji Adefarasin, meant "it was unlawful for the plaintiffs (Guardian Newspapers) to publish any report or statement which is true and which brings or is calculated to bring the federal military; government or state government or a public officer to ridicule or disrepute".

So, even though Messrs Tunde Thompson and Nduka Irabor of The Guardian, had their facts and story right, they were clamped in prison for one year, while their employer was fined N50,000, for publishing their report.

Courtesy of another stringent and anachronistic legislation, the

state security (Preventive Detention) decree No. 2, Buhari and his agents routinely rounded up perceived opponents of government policies. The victims were held in deplorable conditions in prisons across the country.

When Buhari's successor, the gaptoothed General Ibrahim Babangida took over in 1985, he caused the then Nigerian Security Organisation (NSO) to open up the dungeons for Nigerians to have an idea of the horror unleashed on Nigerians during the 23 months (January 1, 1984-August 27, 1985) of the Buhari reign.

The streak of sadism in the crusading helmsman of 1984 was evident when his government caused former Ogun State Governor Chief Bisi Onabanjo, to be removed from his hospital bed at Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH) and incarcerated at Bauchi prison. The ex-governor had undergone a surgical operation four days earlier.

Political historians would also have difficulty reconciling the no-nonsense Buhari assiduously implementing a currency exchange exercise (in 1984) and the gaping loopholes through which 53 suitcases (believed to be laden with currency notes) arrived at the airport and passed unchallenged to their destination.

As millions of Nigerians, both healthy and indisposed, queued for long hours at banks across the country to have their outlawed legal tenders exchanged for new ones, reports of rackets in Daura, Katsina State (former part of Karuna State) made the rounds in Lagos and elsewhere.

Daura, according to report, also had a sprawling presidential lodge built, even though it was neither a state capital nor a city of industrial or historical import.

And then the story of import licences and the patron-client networks that subsisted at the time. Some accounts said the system of allocation and the abuses were as destructive to the economy as they were in the heydays of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN).

If the NYDJ realised that Buhari was in charge as Head of State when Nigeria acted foul of international anti-terrorist laws by having Alhaji Umaru Dikko crated and drugged in the United Kingdom for freighting back to Nigeria, perhaps, it would have comprehended the character of Buhari's nationalism better.

Buhari, the patriot and statesman, took exception to the devious devices employed by the Babangida regime in the execution of the

planned national elections of 1991. Speaking on the Hausa service of the BBC - forget that it is almost always the Hausa service that hosts him - the former Head of State said there was nothing to guarantee Nigerians would have free and fair elections.

His words: "Honestly, I am pessimistic. I do not see the elections as free and fair and I will rather not participate". He spoke in June, 1991, but as it turned out, he clearly discerned Babangida's intentions and fore-warned the nation, accordingly.

The Buhari who is forthright was the national leader who, speaking at an Anniversary Lecture at Arewa House, Kaduna in May 1998, berated leaders who were "thieves" and "rogues" and deserved to be condemned and ostracised. HE said they had "a vicious mindset" that must not be applauded.

Dan Musa links violence to past leaders' fear of probe

>From Bayo Ohu (Katsina) and

Mohammed Abubakar (Maiduguri)

SECOND Republic Deputy Senate President, Alhaji Mamman Abubakar. Dan-Musa, has blamed the crises in the country on corrupt politicians and past public office holders who are bent on destabilising the present administration to protect their selfish interests.

These are individuals who participated and collaborated with the military in looting the nation's treasury, and so would not like the country to stabilise and democracy to succeed, so that their past evil deeds would not be uncovered.

But he advised the Federal Government to quickly complete the on-going probes and investigations so that those who are guilty would be punished.

According to him, unless immediate steps are taken to punish those who have collaborated to ruin the nation's economy by illegally enriching themselves, "they would continue to use their ill-gotten wealth to sponsor violence and to destabilise the country.

Their tactics, he pointed out, was that if there is confusion and large-scale disorder in the country, the present administration would collapse and the various atrocities they had committed in the past and which the government is investigating, would be swept under the

carpet.

Urging President Olusegun Obasanjo to "do everything possible to get at those who have contributed to the woes of the country," he said the President would be naive to expect the enemies of democracy to fold their arms and allow the present democracy to succeed.

He stressed: "It is my belief that those who have vested interests are afraid and not at ease with the happenings in government which they know will soon come after them to account for the sources of their ill-gotten wealth.

"These people are desperate and they could hide under any guise to cause confusion and ensure that the on-going efforts at sanitising the polity do not succeed.

Speaking on the Islamic Sharia law, the former Senator said Alhaji Shehu Usman Shagari and Maj.-Gen. Muhammadu Buhari (rtde), as responsible leaders, could not be deceived by anybody and have the right to voice their opinions on any issue.

He said former President Shagari was right to say that since the National Council of State was not a court of law, it had no constitutional right to dictate to the state governors or compel them to take any particular action, adding that there was no provision in the constitution that the governors should take orders from the President.

He also defended Buhari, saying: "If the issue of Sharia was only discussed at a meeting between the Vice-President Atiku Abubakar and the governors of the 19 northern states, Buhari was right in his assertion "because the vice-president and the governors do not constitute the National Council of State.

Federal Capital Territory Minister Ibrahim Bunu on Wednesday led a high-powered government delegation to Borno State to enlighten the people on the need for peaceful co-existence.

On the delegation were the Senate Minority Leader, Ali Modu Sheriff, Chairman Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, Abubakar Mahdi, Minister of Inter-Governmental Affairs in the Presidency, Alhaji Ibrahim Kidda, Presidential Liaison Officer (Senate) Kashim Ibrahim and some members of the House of Representatives.

Bunu, who spoke on behalf of the group, expressed the concern of President Obasanjo on the recent skirmishes in some parts of the

country and warned the people against precipitating another civil war.

He cautioned that religious wars consume more victims than civil wars, saying: "So in order to sustain the relative peace in Borno State in view of the disturbances in Kaduna, community leaders and other opinion leaders should concretise on the gains of the earlier peace efforts."

The governor, Male Kachalla, remarked that the recent crisis in some parts of the country was capable of undermining the much-needed development in the country, noting that no development could take place under a chaotic environment.

"I, therefore, urge all to ensure peaceful co-existence. As individuals and groups we have a responsibility to preserve the unity of this country.

"We have established a long standing friendship among our various people. Our communities have become inter-woven as a result of inter-marriages. Huge investments have been made by Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba and other groups in areas outside their states of origin. Therefore, we have no option but to tolerate one another as Nigerians and strive hard for the continuous corporate existence of our dear nation.

Ohaneze meets behind closed doors

>From Sunny Igboanugo, Enugu

A high-level meeting of Ohaneze Ndigbo, a pan-Igbo Cultural and Social Organisation took place yesterday's Enugu, Enugu State, the second in two weeks, in what insiders say was to review developments across the country since their last meeting a fortnight ago.

The group, after that meeting on February 29, told reporters that they would begin a day-to-day appraisal of the situation in the country and would make known their reaction on every account.

Yesterday's meeting was behind closed doors as journalists and non-members were barred. The body's council of elders constituting notable figures of Igbo, and traditional rulers, met upstairs in a one-storey building located at the Government Reserved Area (GRA) Enugu, while the members of the General Assembly waited downstairs.

At their last meeting, the Ohaneze had praised the northern state governors who had agreed to rescind Sharia legal system, after attending the National Council of State meeting.

However, some of the governors had since reneged by their position, especially after Alhaji Shehu Shagari and Maj.-Gen. Muhammadu Buhari, two prominent northerners, had spoken in favour of Sharia law.

It was not clear what the agenda of the Ohaneze was yesterday, but they had been going round, holding meetings with state governors from the South-East zone, as well as the different houses of assembly, apparently to mobilise them to toe a collective line in responding to current development in the country.

Source explained that the meeting was not that of the full house, but a parley to reconcile members of the newly-constituted strategy committee with the Council of Elders, following a face-off recently which triggered at mass registration of the committee as a result of the alleged high-handedness of the council.

Ohaneze was also said to have spoken in favour of the Igbo people to the East, a position adopted by the Anambra State Governor Chinwoke Mbadinugu.

He urged his kit and kin in other parts of the country to back to develop their place where their investment and lives would be safe.

According to him: "We have found ourselves developing other places, patronising other people. I do not see anything wrong with that, that goes to show that Igbo and Easterners take Nigeria as their own. Except that the rest of the country have not taken the Igbo and the Easterners as part of this country.

"And that is what we are trying to establish at this time. And that is why in reaction, we are calling for confederation: Let people go to their respective zones and develop them.

Labour affirms faith in govt

By Prisca Egede,

Labour Reporter

THE Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) has affirmed its belief in and commitment to the corporate existence of the country. It also have

kudos to President Olusegun Obasanjo Administration for "good governance".

Rising from an extra-ordinary session of its central working committee yesterday, NLC noted that the current crises in the country triggered off by adoption of Sharia law by some Northern states, was "more political than religious".

Reading a statement at the end of the meeting NLC President Adams Oshiomhole noted that the losers at the Sharia-related crisis were the "working class, the peasants and the masses, irrespective of their religious affiliation".

Deploing the "carnage, wanton destruction of lives and property" on the crises that had engulfed the nation in the past two weeks, Oshiomhole declared:

"The wanton and senseless destruction of lives and property, clearly manifest the fact that the security of the nation is porous, ill-prepared to pre-empt volatile situations".

He went on: "The seriousness of the situation is underlined by the level of destruction and wastage which President Obasanjo has admitted to be the worst since the civil war".

The congress also deplored the "senseless reprisal killings" of more Nigerians in some parts of the country, notably Aba, Umuahia, Owerri, Uyo and Sokoto, adding that the apparent ineptitude of state security apparently to foresee and pre-empt the crisis and carnage," was disturbing.

The labour leader also described as "disappointing and unfortunate" the utterances attributed to two former heads of state, Alhaji Shehu Shagari and Maj.-Gen. Muhammadu Buhari "notable and highly-placed Nigerian leaders who overnight changed from their role of elderstatesmen to champions of ethnic and religious bigotry".

According to Oshiomhole, their unguarded utterances become more disturbing, coming at a time when there was high tension in the country and the nation needed more statesmen and less ethnic and religious champions.

The congress, also warned the Federal Government to recognise anti-democratic forces were not necessary not weaklings," they have definite interest to protect the erstwhile discredit social order".

"We therefore condemn all anti-democratic forces and all persons who are nostalgic about taking the country back to its deplorable past in furtherance of militarisation of the country and their sectarian interests".

While sympathising with the families that have suffered deaths and losses, the congress also urged the Federal Government to "quickly give succour to the displaced persons and also to compensate victims of the riots for damage to lives and property.

It reaffirmed its commitment to build bridges across ethnic, religious and partisan divides, adding that workers, youths, peasants and the masses who are often losers in such power game, should not allow themselves to be used in a struggle from which they would never benefit.

Southern leaders to meet over Sharia riots
Demand for Sovereign National Conference rises
By Nkechi Nwosu and

Clifford Ndujihe

APAN-SOUTHERN Nigerian leaders meeting is to hold next week over current national disturbances. Ikemba Nnewi, Chief Emeka Odumegwu-Ojukwu said yesterday.

Meanwhile, governors of the South-East and South-South zones of the federation are scheduled to parley over the recent religious upheavals in the country, among sundry other issues to be discussed in Enugu tomorrow.

Afenifere, the par-Yoruba group's leader, Chief Abraham Adesanya however said yesterday that he was unaware of any planned meeting with South-East leaders although he expressed support for it. The National Democratic Coalition (NADECO) of which he is also a chieftain yesterday also restated the call for a sovereign national conference.

Chief Odumegwu Ojukwu on the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) last night confirmed the meeting, saying it ought not cause a stir in government.

Reacting to the suggestion that the meeting, between Igbo apex organisation Ohaneze and the Yoruba political group Afenifere was sending certain signals to the entire country, Ojukwu said: "The

Ulama meeting over there in the north has been sending suspicious signals to us in the south too".

He said whatever signals such parleys might send to others would not deter the conferences.

Ojukwu praised President Olusegun Obasanjo for the deft manner he has handled the Sharia controversy so far and expressed willingness to lend a helping hand.

He expressed regrets over the recent violence which he said had wrecked havoc on Igbo across the country, threatening severe reprisal if the nationality experienced such carnage in the future.

But Chief Adesanya, speaking with The Guardian on telephone last night said: "I am not aware of such a meeting. But it is a good idea."

"That is what we in Afenifere have been saying; that it is better to jaw-jaw than war-war".

A statement by Ayogu Eze, Enugu State's Information and Culture Commissioner said the Governors' meeting would map out action plans for harnessing opportunities of the two zones within the Nigerian Federation.

Other areas of co-operation touted by the governors are:

means of ensuring economic integration and joint ventures;

formulation of an agenda for promoting peaceful co-existence of all ethnic groups; and

definite steps towards maximizing the strengths and opportunities of the two zones, anchored on education, entrepreneurship and small and medium-scale industries.

NADECO's steering which met in Lagos on Wednesday restated the call for a forum to address the nation's conflicts and described the recent violence over the Sharia as reprehensible.

A statement by Chris Abara, said the group regretted that government did not show the same promptness and decisiveness on the Sharia as it did on Odi and Ketu incidents.

It also noted that constitutional conferences restricted Sharia to civil cases.

It said: "We will remind the nation that on two separate occasions, at the 1978/79 and the 1989/90 constitutional conferences held respectively under Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo (rtd) and Gen. Ibrahim Babangida (rtd), the consensus was to restrict Sharia to civil cases. The consensus was embodied in the 1979, 1990 and so-called 1999 constitutions".

It added: "We refuse to speculate as to the reasons for attempting to overthrow this delicate balance which such devout Moslems as the Sardauna Ahmadu Bello, the Prime Minister, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Head of State, Gen. Murtala Mohammed, President (Gen.) Ibrahim Babangida, Head of State (Gen.) Sani Abacha and Head of State (Gen.) Abdulsalami Abubakar accepted, respected and implemented when they were in power".

Noting that several organisations and nationalities in different parts of the country in the South, North, East and West were now calling for a national conference, NADECO said: "The present system arising from a military-dictated constitution is not perceived by Nigerians as a solution to their problems".

It said the proposed conference would not replace any arm of government as feared by antagonists.

"Sovereignty means that the matters agreed to by the conference cannot be amended by any arm of government, but will form the basis of producing a lasting constitution for a Federal Nigeria.

"It is not just ignorance but an act of duplicity and mischief-making for opponents of the sovereign national conference to misrepresent the meaning of sovereignty in the context of the Sovereign National Conference".

AD raises truce panel

By Clifford Ndugibe,

Political Reporter

THE Ambassador Mamman Yusuf-led faction of the Alliance for Democracy (AD) rose from a National Executive Council (NEC) meeting yesterday, calling for an end to aggrieved members.

To actualise these, it took the first step by raising a five-man

truce panel comprising eminent personalities. Although the committee members were not made public, The Guardian learnt that they are legal icons, Chief FRA Williams (SAN) and Prof. Ben Nwabueze (SAN), Ambassador Gubadia, Alhaji M.D. Yusuf and Koye Majekodunmi.

Addressing reporters after the stormed parley, Mamman who stressed that reconciliation as paramount in the party, declared a "no victor, no vanquished" situation between his group and that of Adamu Song.

On fears that the crisis may be far from over since the Song faction also met at Agura Hotels, Abuja yesterday, Yusuf described the meeting as illegal. Earlier, the party's National Secretary, Dr. Udentia O. Udentia declared the Lagos NEC meeting illegal.

The need for reconciliation of all groups in the AD, Mamman explained was to ensure an all inclusive convention on April 7 and 8 in Abuja.

At the end of the meeting, Chief Imo, reading a three-paragraph statement said the true committee is expected to conclude its assignment before the convention.

"The National Executive Council (NEC) of the Alliance for Democracy (AD) met today March 9, 2000 (yesterday) at Lagos Airport Hotel, Ikeja, Lagos State. In the meeting attended by the Governors of Lagos State, Ondo State, Ogun and representatives of governors of Ekiti, Oyo and Osun states, representatives of the National Assembly, State Party Chairmen, Party leaders and elders, matters of great importance on issues affecting the party were deliberated upon and after very extensive, exhaustive and frank discussions, the following decisions were arrived at:

That even though the independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the Federal High Court, Abuja and majority of the leaders and members of the party have endorsed, and re-affirmed the leadership of Ambassador Yusuf Mamman as the authentic national chairman of Alliance for Democracy, he (Mamman) sued for reconciliation in the larger interest of the party and the nation and consequently, the meeting resolved to reconcile all the aggrieved members of the party before the national convention; and

that to bring about an effective and lasting reconciliation, a five-man arbitration panel of eminent Nigerians who are not necessarily members of the AD be set up to arbitrate and reconcile the aggrieved party members before the national convention of the party.

The members of the committee are being contacted and their names would be made public in a matter of days. The committee is expected to finish its work within the shortest possible time to allow for an all-inclusive National Convention.

Besides the governors and their representatives, the parley was attended by Chief Ayo Adebajo, Chief Ayo Fasanmi, Chief Chuba Egolun; Alhaji Tudun Wada and Chief Jimmy Imo.

Lagos State Deputy Governor Kofoworola Buckner-Adekere, Alhaji Ganiyu Dawodu, Dr. A. N. O. Ndulue, Tunji Adebisi, Chief Olanihun Ajayi, Chief Oladipo Olaita, Chief Femi Okunroumu, Dr. Tunji Otegbeye, Dr. Nathaniel Aina, and some chairmen and secretaries of the state chapters of the party were in attendance.

Kaduna governor blames crisis on saboteurs

>From Saxone Akhaine, Kaduna

FIFTH columnists, angling for an opportunity to derail Nigeria's fledgling democracy exploited the Sharia controversy to ignite the recent Kaduna riots, according to the governor, Ahmed Mohammed Makarfi.

Although he did not identify such persons, the governor said they were highly placed members of the public but gave assurance that there would be no sacred cows when government clampdown begins.

According to him, the Sharia controversy in Kaduna was only at its infancy and could not have resulted in the mind-boggling carnage without some unseen hands being at work.

Addressing an ad hoc committee of the Senate investigating the crisis, which visited the state yesterday, the governor said the crisis was very unfortunate.

He told the committee led by Senator Wahab Dosunmu (AD, Lagos) at the Kaduna State Government House that the crisis was the handiwork of political opponents and not over religious differences.

He said religion was only used as a smokescreen by the powerful forces.

He said: "Although the whole scenario looks confusing, but it has been established that the environment created by the demonstration against Sharia was cashed upon by some people who are determined to

ruin democracy in the country."

According to him, the issue had not attained a level to provoke such a crisis, as there was not even a bill on the ground to suggest that his administration would go ahead with it.

Makarfi exonerated the state legislators from blame, pointed out that they were merely collating views and receiving memoranda, and had not taken any action before the conflagration broke out.

He said he deliberately refused to interfere with what the Assembly was doing in consonance with democratic principles.

Commending the Senate for constituting a panel to investigate the crisis, Makarfi pledged his administration's resolve to hold an independent investigation.

Dosunmu told the governor that the committee was on a fact-finding mission, adding that the Senate was disturbed by the riots which started in Kaduna.

=====xxx

Text of Speech (March 1, 2000) Following Religious Crisis
That Claimed Hundreds Of Lives in Kaduna and Parts of
Southeastern Nigeria and Suspension of Full Implementation of The Sharia in
Zamfara, Sokoto and Niger States Text:
President Olusegun Obasanjo's address to the nation on Sharia crisis
Wednesday, March 1, 2000

Fellow Nigerians,

I speak to you again today with a sad and heavy heart, having recently returned from a visit to Kaduna, where I saw the carnage and devastation resulting from the recent disturbances in that city. I had decided to make a personal visit there, because I was very concerned by the security and other reports I was getting from the officials on the ground. I could not believe that Nigerians were capable of such barbarism against one another. But what I saw there was perhaps even more gruesome in detail.

Once the disturbances started, I was naturally in constant touch with the Kaduna State Deputy Governor, who was in charge in the absence of the Executive Governor, and who continuously kept me abreast of developments there. I did not order the troops in right from the start, because the normal procedure in such matters is

that the Governor of the State concerned must first indicate that the police strength at his disposal is unable to contain the disturbances, and then specifically request for military assistance. Or, in special cases, the police through the Inspector-General could make such a request. Once that request came from the Deputy Governor, I immediately ordered that troops should move in, to support the police and take necessary measures to put an end to the killings and destruction in that city and its environs.

As soon as the disturbances began to die down during the week, I sent a Ministerial delegation to Kaduna, with instructions to bring me a first hand report of the situation there. The delegation's report was incredibly galling. I, accordingly, decided to travel to Kaduna, to see things for myself. And what I saw was disheartening and upsetting. The devastation was so massive, it seemed as though Kaduna had overnight been turned into a battlefield. My visit confirmed in every single detail all the reports I had been getting - the mindless killings and maimings, the wanton destruction of property, the fear and uncertainty on the faces of those who survived the carnage, and the pervasive mutual suspicion.

It was clear to me that while a toll was being taken of the massive losses that attended the disturbances, it was necessary to immediately begin the process of healing and reconciliation. I met leaders of the factions and groups involved - the religious and political leaders, the workers and the leaders of thought. We explored all possible ways of bringing the carnage to a permanent halt, and reached agreement on a number of issues. But what I found most astonishing was the discovery that a majority of those who died in the disturbances were Nigerians who had lived all their lives in Kaduna, and could not truthfully call anywhere else their home. All so suddenly, people who had been their neighbours for decades turned on them, and massacred them. And yet, those who were responsible for these murders claim that they were acting in defence of faith or religion. I cannot believe that any religion in this day and age can sanction the taking of innocent life.

While in Kaduna, we also took time to show our gratitude to those few Nigerians who had gone out of their way, and at great risk to their own safety, to do whatever they could to put an end to the bloodshed. We visited His

Royal Highness the Emir of Zaria and community leaders in Zaria, who had shown exemplary courage in their vigorous efforts both to prevent and to contain the bloodshed. Just before we left Kaduna for Zaria, the painful news came of the disturbances in Aba, a city we had just visited two days previously. The disturbances there were started by a group of renegades who were under the misguided but fatal impression that they were taking due revenge for the murder of their kith and kin in Kaduna whose bodies were brought back on a trailer. When all the statistics of the devastation in Kaduna, Kachia, Aba and Umuahia are recorded, we will find, I am sad to say, that this has been one of the worst incident of blood-letting that this country has witnessed since the Civil War. And all this at a time when we do have a Constitution in place, when we have duly elected representatives both at the local, state and federal levels, when the fundamental freedoms of worship and speech, and the freedom from all forms of discrimination are guaranteed to every citizen. We cherish and uphold these fundamental freedoms. These acts cannot, and must not go on. We must bring to a very prompt end the temptation to always resort to violence in any disagreement between groups, whether religious or ethnic or political. We must rid ourselves of the mentality of murderousness that stems from fear and suspicion of the other person. We must rediscover the value of dialogue.

As the Vice-President has announced in his press briefing, the National Council of States met yesterday, Tuesday, February 29, 2000, and deliberated on the alarming security situation in the country.

The Council was deeply saddened by recent events in Kaduna, and by subsequent events in Abia State, both of which have led to enormous loss of lives and destruction of property. The Council strongly condemned these events, and called for an immediate cessation of hostilities, and of these acts of senseless murder and destruction of property.

The Council also reviewed the remote and immediate causes of the disturbances, and noted that the Penal Code currently in force in the Northern States is substantially based on Sharia Law, with the modifications that imprisonment is substituted in place of amputation of limbs, as punishment for stealing, and also as punishment for adultery, instead of stoning to death. The Council noted that these modifications are consistent

with the human rights principles enshrined in our Constitution, and considered the punishments adequate in the circumstances.

The Council unanimously agreed that all States that have recently adopted Sharia Law should in the meantime revert to the status quo ante. That is, Sharia, as practised in Penal Code, continues to be practiced by all States concerned. The Council urges all Nigerians to remain calm and law-abiding. Provocative and inciting utterances will not be tolerated. This position by the Council is a triumph of love of fatherland, triumph of maturity and sustenance of security of the nation and preservation of our corporate existence. There can be no winners in the destructions, all Nigerians are losers. And in peace and cessation of destructions of life and property, all Nigerians are winners. But to respect the feeling of one another and to hasten the process of reconciliation, there is no victory to be celebrated and no loss to be mourned.

In the course of our development, let me say for the benefit of investors in our economy that this tragic event is a hiccup which is not unusual for a nation like Nigeria which has been oppressed and suppressed by its rulers in recent years. The hiccup will be put behind us and we will Insha-Allah move full steam ahead.

I enjoin all Nigerians to embark on the urgent task of reconciliation and confidence-building which is vital to the rebuilding of relations and communities. Let us move forward to enjoy the fundamental rights enshrined in our Constitution and to develop our country politically, economically and socially. Let our motto be "Reconciliation for Development".

What we must now do is to begin to return to the fundamental faith that life, all life, is sacred. There is nothing in our culture that even remotely justifies the cynicism with which so many of us today respond to acts of lawlessness and wickedness. We have lost our sense of outrage and moral sensitivity. The casualness with which we react to corruption and other forms of criminal behaviour does not come from religious faith or from cultural tradition.

We do not have any such religions or cultures. Rather, what seems to have happened is that after so many years of tyranny and mindless violence, encouraged and practised by the state itself, we have all grown indifferent to the moral, even religious duties that we

all owe, one to another.

But today, we are no longer hostages of a mean and lawless government. Our conduct, our relationships, whether religious, ethnic or political, must be governed by the laws of the land. We must begin again to deal with one another in transparent comradeship, and seek to settle our misunderstandings peacefully, decently and humanely.

We thank the National Assembly for their concern and support during the crisis. We are encouraged particularly by the pronouncement of the Senate President that the Executive will be fully supported to deal firmly and decisively with disturbance that may emanate in any part of the country.

We appreciate the formation and the work of the Nigerian Inter-Religious Council (NIREC), which has been charged with the responsibility of promoting the ideals of peaceful coexistence, especially among the various religions in our country. They have held several meetings, Christians and Moslems, and were in fact under the impression they were making considerable progress, when the upheavals in Kaduna occurred. I urge them not to relent in their efforts. Perhaps through their work, and that of all other well-meaning Nigerians, we shall begin to build the Nigeria that we all dream of, but seem unable to realize. I thank our brothers and sisters in all parts of the country who, through prayers and positive action and efforts, contributed to moving us away from another precipice. In this group must be included some leading Imams, Christian leaders and traditional rulers.

Consultations will be stepped up to increase interaction and to enhance reconciliation.

All Nigerians are assured of safety and security in their normal places of residence. Governors, Ministers, Members of the National Assembly and all political officers and appointees are returning to their States and their constituencies to help in the process of binding the wounds, removing fear and suspicion and bringing about reconciliation from now till the week-end. Law enforcement agents have been instructed to deal decisively with anyone or group who disturbs public peace and order.

However, in matters of religion and conscience, restraint must be exercised at all levels of government but particularly at the highest level. This has conditioned

the Federal Government's action throughout the Sharia controversy so far. We thank the media for the understanding of the restraint of the Government and for the moderation and balance most of them exhibited during the difficult period.

I must not end this brief address without assuring all our fellow citizens of the firm determination of our Government to resist any attempt from any quarter to pursue a line that can lead to the disintegration of this country. Those who break our laws will be punished to the full extent of the law. There will be no sacred cows. And those who extend the hand of fellowship to their fellow citizens will find understanding and friendship. God bless you all. And God bless Nigeria.

This material is being reposted for wider distribution by the Africa Policy Information Center (APIC). APIC's primary objective is to widen international policy debates around African issues, by concentrating on providing accessible policy-relevant information and analysis usable by a wide range of groups and individuals.

Auto-response addresses for more information (send any e-mail message): africapolicy-info@igc.org (about the Africa Policy Electronic Distribution List); apic-info@igc.org (about APIC).

Documents previously distributed, as well as a wide range of additional information, are also available on the Web at: <http://www.africapolicy.org>

To be added to or dropped from the distribution list write to apic@igc.org. For more information about reposted material, please contact directly the source mentioned in the posting.

Africa Policy Information Center,
110 Maryland Ave. NE, #509, Washington, DC 20002. Phone: 202-546-7961. Fax: 202-546-1545. E-mail: apic@igc.org.

=====
=====xxx

Original Message-----

From: APIC

Sent: Wednesday, March 08, 2000 8:56 AM

To: APIC@INTERNET {apic@igc.org}

Subject: Nigeria: Obasanjo on Sharia Crisis

Nigeria: Obasanjo on Sharia Crisis

Date distributed (ymd): 000308

Document reposted by APIC

+++++Document Profile+++++

Region: West Africa

Issue Areas: +political/rights+ +security/peace+ Summary Contents: This posting contains the March 1 speech to the nation by Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, on the crisis concerning the implementation of Sharia law in several states in northern Nigeria.

For additional news, see:

<http://www.africanews.org/west/nigeria>

<http://nigeriaweb.odili.net>

<http://www.nigeriacentral.com>

For more links and background, see APIC's newly updated Nigeria page (<http://www.africapolicy.org/action/nigeria.htm>), as well as additional links to news, data, and more in APIC's regional pages:

<http://www.africapolicy.org/featdocs/west.htm>

<http://www.africapolicy.org/featdocs/westnews.htm>

=====**XXX**

From: Nubi Achebo <kitua@wwa.com>

Wednesday, March 8, 2000

Pro-Sharia riots erupt in Sokoto

Sokoto shut, Christians flee

HUNDREDS of Police Mobile Force (PMF) personnel were on the way to the ancient Caliphate City of Sokoto yesterday to arrest chaos unleashed by demonstrators demanding the implementation of contentious Sharia, the Islamic legal code.

Three people were killed and two churches were burnt down, Agence France Press (AFP) said, quoting resident and witnesses, although this report could not be confirmed last night.

However, presidential spokesman Dr. Doyin Okupe told The Guardian at about 9 p.m. yesterday that the situation had been brought under control.

The police force headquarters, Abuja and the Zone Seven Command, Minna which directly supervise the Sokoto State Police Command sent the mobile team to the city to strengthen security after Moslem students of Uthman Dan Fodio University, Sokoto went on rampage, destroying and

torching property as they clamoured for the immediate introduction of the Islamic legal system.

The rioting erupted shortly after noon and brought all activities to a halt as offices and shops were hurriedly closed down.

According to witnesses, there was chaos on the streets. But Ahmadu Bello way, the commercial nerve - centre of the city was the hottest spot.

Police officers yesterday quickly invaded the streets to control the chaotic situation and prevent large-scale destruction command headquarters source said.

The disturbances were said to have been provoked by the students following the closure of the tertiary institution earlier yesterday.

Witnesses said on sighting baggage-carrying students, people milled around in groups and soon news filtered was out that the institution was shut down over the students agitation for Sharia Law introduction, rioting started spontaneously.

Consequent upon the chaotic situation, the authorities yesterday ordered that all schools and colleges be closed indefinitely, sources said.

According to ADP, a Nigerian journalist who arrived late yesterday in Gusau, said thousands of Christians panicked and fled into police and army barracks.

Sporadic gunfire could be heard during the day but appeared later in the day to be dying down as the police appeared to bring the clashes under control. It was not clear whether the gunfire was from the police or from rioters, the journalist added.

The "B" operations room at the police force headquarters, Abuja was a ablate of activities yesterday as officers remained in their offices ensuring that movement of personnel to scenes of the riot were swift.

Two persons are feared dead by the police who, however said the victims identifies were not yet known.

Mr. Theophilus Akeredolu, Assistant Inspector-General of Police in charge of force headquarters operations was away on a lecture tour of the Police Academy Jos, but his aides told The Guardian that Mr. Lawrence Alobi, a Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) is doing

everything possible to boost police presence in Sokoto by drafting personnel from neighbouring states.

Mr. Y. Y. Jimoh, the Sokoto State Commissioner of Police, could not be contacted as no telephone lines were continuously engaged.

But Mrs. Olamide Jimoh, his aged mother, who was eventually reached through telephone in his official residence told The Guardian that teachers reaching her indicated that hundreds of students had taken to the streets.

She said she had not ventured out, however, but was receiving information through the telephone as her son was out of town.

The presidency has received official reports of the demonstrations, The Guardian learnt last night.

Sources close to the offices of the National Security Adviser and the Director-General of the States Security Services (SSS) said relevant security personnel had been swiftly drafted to the breakdown of laws and order.

A source said: "Yes, we have received reports on the development in Sokoto but we cannot entirely say in a tone of finality that a particular thing was responsible as this the Sokoto riot) is entirely a students' affair. Nevertheless, we have adequately taken up the matter at the highest levels. Particular security agencies with specific schedule have been drafted to the scene while other covert efforts are being undertaken to avert any tragedy of the scale of a full-blown riot. Needless to add that the situation is under police control and we have no reason to think that the development will get out of control.

Corroborating the claims, Dr. Okupe said: "I can tell you categorically that the situation has come under perfect control. The school has been shut down to allow peace and peace has returned to the town finally. It is true that earlier in the day (yesterday) there were some skirmishes caused by some students demonstrating and in order to quickly nip the riot in the bud, the school authorities immediately decided to close down the school. I can tell you that the place is now calm."

Demands by Moslems in the northern city of Kaduna for the Islamic code to be introduced had led to two weeks of unrest in which around 1,000 have died.

Sokoto, which unlike Kaduna is predominantly Moslem, is the traditional centre of Islam in Nigeria, home to the 19th century Sokoto Caliphate

set up after a jihad in 1804 led by Islamic scholar Usman Dan Fodio.

The state was one of three which last week denied a government declaration that it had withdrawn plans to introduce the code.

The issue of Sharia - declared in Gusau last October and signed into law in Sokoto and Niger states last month - has led to some of the country's worst unrest in 30 years.

Gusau is the capital of Zamfara state which was the first to declare Sharia law last year. Its implementation began last January. The authorities in Sokoto have also declared Sharia but have yet to commence implementation.

Sokoto and Zamfara States shares a border, and the latter was carved out of the former.

The Sultan of Sokoto, who is the spiritual head on Monday led a delegation of (Hausa) northern traditional rulers to meet with President Olusegun Obasanjo and Vice President Abubakar Atiku for five hours of talks.

They emerged from the talks with a communique which the sultan read on behalf of the traditional rulers urging Nigerians to live with one another in peace and harmony.

The outbreak of violence in Kaduna was followed by reprisal attacks in Abia State and other areas South East that left thousands killed and others displaced from their homes on both sides.

Igbos leaders later have warned that any further attacks on their kinsmen would meet with stiffer retaliatory strikes even as the presidency sued for unity among the various groups.

Also yesterday, Okupe, speaking with the BBC berated the foreign press coverage of the Sharia-related crisis and dismissed fears of the young democracy falling apart.

He said that Nigeria is not like Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire or Liberia, but, a very large country with over 120 million population located across about one million square miles.

Okupe, therefore, stressed that sporadic disturbances in isolated places should not make people to assume that the "whole Nigeria is under configuration."

By John Chiahemem

12:44 ET

Reuters English News Service

(C) Reuters Limited 2000.

LAGOS, March 8 (Reuters) - As religious violence grows, many Nigerians fear their political leaders are running out of ideas on averting a breakup of Africa's most populous country.

Several politicians, including influential members of the National Assembly, say President Olusegun Obasanjo has been seriously weakened by the crisis, which was sparked by some states in the largely Islamic north introducing Moslem sharia law.

Hundreds of people have been killed in the past two weeks in the resulting unrest.

Reminiscent of the run-up to the 1960s civil war over breakaway Biafra, thousands of Nigerians have fled major cities, bound for their home regions for fear of a religious war.

The Senate will meet in coming days over the crisis, one senator told Reuters.

"We have met before and one of the things we agreed was that the president should instruct the attorney-general to go to court to determine the constitutionality of sharia," added the senator, who asked not to be named.

CONSTITUTION FACES FIRST MAJOR TEST

Both supporters and opponents of sharia cite Nigeria's new constitution, which ushered in democracy last May after 15 years of rule by military generals.

But there are genuine fears that the divide over sharia is so sharp and so deeply embedded in Nigeria's complex ethnic and regional patchwork that a supreme court ruling, whichever way, could unleash even more mayhem.

Columnist Azubuike Ishiekwene said it would be difficult to foretell the inclination of a seven-member Supreme Court panel that would decide the issue.

The court has 16 members, all appointed by past military rulers and

divided equally between north and south. Nine are Christian and seven are Moslem.

"The government's greatest anxiety would be not only how to measure the temperament of their lordships, but that once a pronouncement is made, one way or the other, the matter is closed," Ishiekwene wrote in the independent Punch daily last week.

"From that point on the victor and the vanquished are known and the matter assumes a political dimension that could be extremely difficult to control," he added.

SENATORS MULL REFERENDUM

Some senior senators say the sharia issue is so weighty that states planning to adopt the code should refer the matter to a referendum, even though they admit this too could have serious implications on national unity.

"The view of some of us is that the states proposing Sharia should go for a referendum," one senator said.

"Once they take that view they should know that they have opted out of the Nigerian federation because they have chosen a system that is outside the Nigerian system," the senator added.

Islamic sharia law has been used in civil and family cases in northern Nigeria since before independence from Britain in 1960.

But last October the legislature in Zamfara State, which has an overwhelmingly Moslem population, voted for a strict Sharia penal code that prescribes amputations for theft and death for adultery, among other sanctions. It also enforces segregated schools and public transport for men and women.

Riots erupted in the more cosmopolitan northern city of Kaduna last month when Christians led a protest march over plans by the state government there to adopt sharia.

Although sharia sponsors insist non-Moslems will not be affected, many non-Moslems point to dangers in operating what they call two legal systems in one state.

"If you chop off one man's hand for stealing and impose a prison sentence on another for the same offence, soon you'll cause resentment against those with two hands," one politician said.

=====**XXX**

From: Nubi Achebo <kitua@wwa.com>

Nigerian cabinet members sent to constituencies to calm tensions

14:33 ET

Deutsche Presse-Agentur

Copyright (c) 2000, dpa

Abuja (dpa) - For the second time in two weeks, Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo Wednesday sent his cabinet members to their constituencies to calm rising tensions.

Nigeria has been in turmoil in the past two weeks since more states in the northern part of the country indicated their intention to adopt strict Islamic sharia laws.

Zamfara State, in the north, adopted the law in January. Under the sharia, women who do not cover their bodies in public are punished, while thieves have their hands chopped off.

Plans by the northern Kaduna, Yobe, Niger, Kebbi and Sokoto states to adopt the sharia triggered a wave of recent unrest in which 1,000 people died.

Only on Tuesday, at least nine persons were killed in Sokoto in the latest outburst of violence.

Information Minister Dapo Sarumi said Wednesday that the government was concerned about the growing tensions in the country.

=====**XXX**

From: Nubi Achebo <kitua@wwa.com>

Sunday, March 5, 2000

Why Shagari, Buhari Disagreed With Obasanjo

Minutes Reveal Discussion On Sharia

>From

Emeka Nwankpa

(Abuja) and

Austin Edemodu

(Lagos)

PERSONAL deep-seated animosities against President Olusegun Obasanjo may have formed the basis of critical comments by Second Republic President Shehu Shagari and former Head of State, General Muhammadu Buhari on the vexed Sharia issue, according to The Guardian On Sunday investigation.

Observers of the curious development in the relationship between the two ex-Heads of State and President Obasanjo believe that the age-long "cold war" between Shagari and Obasanjo are rooted in perceived animosity.

Alhaji Shagari reacting last Wednesday to the National Council of State meeting resolution that all the Northern states which had adopted the process of introducing Sharia should shelve the idea and revert to the original provisions of the Penal Code operated since independence, said that neither the Federal Government nor the Council has constitutional powers to issue such a directive.

Shagari, who succeeded Obasanjo in 1979 as a democratically-elected executive President but whose government was sacked on December 31, 1983 by the Buhari/Idiagbon military junta was absent at the Council of State meeting.

General Buhari, who was appointed executive chairman of the Petroleum (Special) Trust Fund (PTF) by late Gen. Sani Abacha came soon after Shagari's statement and dissociated himself from the resolution which was made public by Vice President Atiku Abubakar with all the governors of the northern states in attendance.

Buhari, according to informed sources, has been nursing a grudge against the Obasanjo administration especially over the scrapping of the PTF and appointment of an Interim Management Board headed by Dr. Haroun Adamu.

General Buhari has been invited twice by President Obasanjo who handed him an advance copy of a report by the Adamu-led board in which the Fund was discovered to be owing its contractors N21 billion despite the huge money in the Fund's kitty.

President Obasanjo who was said to have expressed displeasure with the contents of the report but asked Buhari to prepare his defence as he (Obasanjo) had maintained that his administration would not allow any sacred cow.

Buhari's comments on the Council of State's meeting has elicited concern in the Presidency although Obasanjo is said to be unperturbed by the development which has led to a series of interactive meetings between him (Obasanjo) and critical sectors of the polity including the media, religious establishments and the traditional institutions.

The President had a dinner with media executives on Friday while he is billed to meet today with Christian groups and tomorrow he will meet with Emirs and Moslem leaders.

It was learnt that Shagari, while out of power had accused Obasanjo of trying to teleguide him in the running of the country, an attempt which he resisted resulting in mutual suspicion which was aggravated by intensified public criticisms of the Shagari administration by Obasanjo.

The source added that on-going investigations have consistently fingered a serving minister as one of the brains behind the recent upheavals in some parts of the country.

He also remarked that the target of such upheavals were the various barracks, explaining that the respective heads of various arms of the armed forces have been expressing their unalloyed loyalty to the Obasanjo Presidency.

It was however not clear at the weekend whether a planned series of visits, beginning this week, by the respective service chiefs to some strategic commands under them are part of the efforts by the armed forces to douse possible disaffection in the ranks in response to the recent upheavals in isolated parts of the county.

Meanwhile, minutes of the meeting of the National Council of State released by the Presidency at the weekend has disproved postulations by Gen. Buhari, that the issue of shelving Sharia was not discussed at last Tuesday's meeting of the advisory body.

The minutes of the February 29 meeting being publicised by the federal government, indicated that the Sharia matter was extensively discussed at the meeting which had the former head of state in attendance.

According to the minutes of the meeting signed by the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Chief J. U Ekaette, President Obasanjo, commenting on the security situation in the country, had lamented that the carnage in Kaduna should happen at this crucial time. The president was said to have prayed and expressed the hope that the nation would overcome the precarious situation very soon, and thereafter disclosed that the vice-president had earlier held a closed-door discussion with governors of the Northern states on how to restore peace to the country.

Obasanjo, therefore, invited Vice-President Atiku Abubakar, to brief the council on the outcome of discussion at that meeting, according to the minutes.

Parts of the minutes read:

the Vice-President informed council that the meeting was very frank and held with great sense of responsibility. The Vice President disclosed that the governors:

agreed that there was need to bring the situation under control and restore peace in the country;

that they have identified the Sharia issue as one of the causes of the present upheaval amongst other social, political and economic causes;

agreed that the Sharia issue was not new in the country and had been part of our legal system. Sharia law was embedded in the country's penal code with some modification so that the circumstances of our peculiar backgrounds could be accommodated; and

resolved to return to (the) status quo ante, reverting back to the penal code as the best option to solve the present problem in the country.

Continuing, the minutes indicated that after "a brief discussion," the President, summarizing, had thanked the Vice-President and the Northern governors for their resolutions, which he believed must have been informed by the continued corporate existence of the nation being paramount in the minds.

The President was further reported to have endorsed the early return of the state chief executives to their various states to deal with the crisis situation.

The minutes of the council of state meeting corroborates the

testimonies of both of Oyo State Governor, Chief Lam Adesina, a member of the council, and the Special Assistant to the President on Media and Publicity, Dr. Doyin Okupe, who last week averred that the contentious Sharia issue was indeed discussed at the meeting of the council.

Christian, Moslem Leaders Disagree On Cause Of Kaduna Riots

>From John-Abba Ogbodo, Abuja

A SHARP disagreement ensued at the weekend in Kaduna between Christian and Moslem leaders over the immediate cause of the riots which engulfed Kaduna State.

At a meeting with a Senate delegation led by the Senate President, Dr. Chuba Okadigbo, which held at the council chambers in Kaduna State Government House, the Senate President sought to know what immediately triggered off the mayhem in which hundreds of lives were lost and property worth millions of naira destroyed.

In his submission, the leader of Christians in the state, Rev. Martins Ibrahim Debah, said he would not delve into the extent of the damage done to lives and property of Christians so as not to open fresh wounds.

He, however, narrated that following the proposal by the state governor to introduce the Sharia legal system, Christians in the state embarked on a peaceful demonstration to protest against the introduction.

Debah said that the demonstration was successful until when, on their way from the Government House, they were attacked by Moslem youths who were not happy with the large turn out of Christians in the state. According to him, the Christians were helpless because they only had green leaves whereas the Moslem youths were armed with lethal weapons.

Describing the attack on Christians "barbaric and brutal", the cleric prayed that Nigeria would not witness such festival bestial again.

But the Moslem representative, Alhaji Zubairu Seraju, had a contrary view. In his narration, it was the Christians that triggered the mayhem by first killing one Sani Mohammed on their return journey from the government house. The demonstrating Christians, he further said, blocked roads and made the tone uncomfortable for the Muslim and it was in the circumstance that the Moslems retaliated.

He said he saw no justification in the protest by the Christians asking

"what does it matter to a man if he chooses to eat rice and I choose to eat rice? Why should he come and protest because I have chosen a different meal?"

The Senate President assured both leaders that the Senate ad-hoc committee headed by Wahab Dosunmu would thoroughly investigate the matter and bring the perpetrators to book.

He appealed to them to keep calm while the committee carries out its assignment.

=====**XXX**

Jan, What a beautiful critique of this heavy and , in many ways, unfinished work by Kantiok. I have explained to you that we have come to the scheme of defending what we call a "defensible draft" rather than a final copy. This is so we can helpfully work toward a better final product. It is not approved until the edits, corrections, etc. are made to the resident committee's satisfaction.

Your remarks are so helpful and insightful. I knew James made the right choice and I knew when he told me that he wanted you to read it that you would hold him responsible for a lot of of his "Nigerian-type" generalities, etc.

We will meet on Friday and your response will be available for everyone. James has been here too long which is why there is so much stuff that he wanted to cover.

I will ask him to revise wherever possible to account for the terrible violence stemming from the recent outbreak in Kaduna. This conflict that has caused a lot of new difficulties and gives new light on the seriousness of the shari'a issue. The thesis will have to be written in light of the realities of the here and now. No idealizing about "dialogue" until the facts are taken into account. Shari'a has been set aside, for the moment, but is **not** going to go away. Relationships between Muslims and Christians in the North are at an all-time low.

Thanks more than I can say. We'll be in touch.

Yours,

Dean

=====**XXX**

Religious Violence in Nigeria February 2000

Dr. Danny McCain

IICS

Nigeria has been wracked with periodic religious violence for the last twenty years. During the last twelve years we have been here, there have been several major confrontations. There were a few when we were in Port Harcourt but, not having been in

the north and just getting adjusted to things in Nigeria, they did not make a lot of impression upon me.

The first major problem I remembered was in about October 1991 shortly after we moved to Jos. Reinhold Bonnke was planning to have a crusade in Kano. (Kano is the big city in Northern Nigeria that we fly in and out of. It is about a three-hour drive from Jos.) The Muslims reacted violently a couple of days before it was to start and several hundred people died in the subsequent conflicts. A few days after this, I went to a PFN (Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria) meeting to do some PR work for our program at the university and heard the official report of the Christians who had died and the churches which had been burned there. It was a very moving experience to me—to sit there and listen to the official report being given to church leaders about actual Christians who had lost their lives for no other reason than that they happened to be Christians. Another part of the meeting involved collecting grain and clothing and other things to help provide refugees with the necessary things they needed during this time of crisis. I personally went down and bought a hundred-pound sack of corn and many other things and took them to the collection center and felt very good about doing it. It was an opportunity to help Christian brothers who had suffered for their faith. This was not something I had ever experienced in the USA.

The next major problem I remember was in the Zango Kakaf area. This is about a two-hour drive from Jos, in southern Kaduna State. A clash developed there over whether or not to move the market from the center of the town, which was dominated by Muslims to the outskirts of the town, which was dominated by the local Kataf people who were all Christians. I visited that area a year or two after this happened and saw all of the burned out buildings that were left in this town. This conflict spilled over into Kaduna and the first time we went to Kaduna, there were still burned out cars on the side of the road in different parts of the city.

There have been several less serious conflicts. About four years ago, I was passing through Kafanchan right when a conflict was developing. I got to see that one up close. I was coming back from a PCCE seminar and was passing through Kafanchan. I had Phil Horton and Dr. Ilori and a couple of other people with me. We begin to see people with bows and arrows and spears and clubs and guns. In fact, we saw hundreds of people pouring into the street. We were stopped five or six times and questioned about who we were and where we were coming from and where we were going. Apparently a young man had been “arrested” by the Muslims a few hours before because he was preaching in the car park and had supposedly “blasphemed” Mohammed. His captors were trying to call their leader to get permission to kill him. When the Christians heard about this, they came out in mass and confronted the Muslims. People died that day right there in Kafanchan in this conflict, both Christians and Muslims. This crisis spilled over to Zaria and eventually to Kaduna and perhaps as many as thirty to fifty people died in this conflict.

Also about six or so years ago right here in Jos, there was a problem that developed. I drove through the Gada Biu Market one morning about 7:00 AM and two

hours later it was burned to the ground as a result of a Christian-Muslim conflict. When I came back from giving some lectures at a mission school a couple of hours later, I passed right through the middle of Jos because I was not aware that we were having a problem. I saw smoke pouring out of our big market because a “Christian” part of it had been burned. Later, while driving through a Muslim area of town, I had to drive around vehicles which had been turned over and burned and, in fact, were still smoldering at the time I passed them. At this time, I can’t even remember what the issue was that sparked that conflict. I think less than ten people died in this conflict.

About two years after that there was another incident here in the Jos area. Supposedly a “Christian” boy about ten years old was caught by a Muslim farmer stealing a garden egg, a small vegetable that looks like a squash. The Muslim farmer killed the boy. The relatives of the boy responded by killing the farmer. Some of his relatives retaliated and the local people then killed the entire extended Muslim family that lived in that area. This was in Bukuru about ten miles south of Jos. Interestingly, I passed within a mile of that incident on the day it happened (or the next) without knowing until later that anything was going on. There have been a few other similar conflicts during the last few years.

A couple of months after the inauguration of our civilian government on May 29, 1999, we started hearing sounds from Zamfara State about the possible introduction of the Muslim Islamic law known as “Sharia.” Nigeria has always had some kind of Sharia around. Sharia is the law, which governs all activities of Muslims, including criminal acts. Previous governments and constitutions have allowed Muslims to practice the civil aspects of Sharia which relate to property disputes and divorce cases and similar things but have had a unified form of criminal law in the country, which was not exclusively based upon Sharia. The governor of Zamfara State argued that now that we have a democratic government, if a particularly state wanted to have Sharia (including the criminal aspects which included cutting off the hand of convicted thieves), as long as it went through the proper legislative process, it could be instituted in any state. So the governor was able to push through legislation through the state legislature to introduce the full-fledged Sharia into the state. He insisted that this would not apply to Christians but the Christians were not convinced.

Many feeble attempts were made on the part of the Christians to stop the implementation of the Sharia but a few weeks ago, Sharia was formally introduced in the state. Some of the early offenses, which have been reported in the newspapers, include a Muslim who was given 80 lashes with a cane for drinking alcohol. Also a man who beat his wife was fined 150,000 Naira (\$1500). He had apparently knocked out two of her teeth. If he can not pay the fine, he will have two of his teeth removed. Also eight young motorcycle operators have been arrested for carrying women on the back of their motorcycle taxis. It is now against the law for women to ride in the same taxis as men. Many other similar type Islamic laws have been introduced including the outlawing of all sporting activities for women which require clothes that expose any of the body other than the face and hands.

The case of Zamfara State was followed with interest by the other northern states and many of them are in various stages of implementing Sharia in their own states. And as this has been going on, the rhetoric between the Christians and Muslims has been heating up.

Kaduna State is the state immediately to the west of Plateau State where we live. It is a state with a mixed population. I would guess that it is about half Christian and half Muslim. If there is a majority of Muslims in the state, it is not a large majority. Because it has both Muslims and Christians it has suffered perhaps more Christian-Muslim conflict than any other state in the country. Kaduna State was the first state where we had the PCCE CRK program. Therefore, I spent about four weeks there over a one-year period back in 1995. I have been to Kaduna several other times for various purposes. It is a city that I think I know very well.

About two weeks ago, the Muslims started holding rallies and demonstrations in Kaduna the state capitol of Kaduna State. For a week, the Muslims marched up and down the streets and went to the capitol and the legislature demanding that Sharia be introduced in the state. To demonstrate that Christians were opposed to this, last Sunday, February 20, the Christian pastors in the various churches urged all Christians to turn out for a mass rally the next day. So last Monday, thousands and thousands of Christians started congregating in the center of Kaduna and marched to the state capitol. They went into the compound with their anti-Sharia posters. The Muslim governor was out of the country at the time so the deputy governor who happened to be a Christian met with the Christian leaders. He informed them that a committee had been set up to look into the Sharia question and that they should make all written submissions to this committee.

This meeting was very peaceful up to this point. However, about the time the meeting was breaking up, some Muslim youths attacked some of the Christians with stones and knives and sticks. The Christians started running away and the Muslims kept up their attack. Several people were initially killed in those first few minutes of the attack. And the attack continued. A big Catholic Church near where the conflict started was burned. As the Christians were fleeing, they also started attacking Muslims and burning mosques. There was no serious attempt by the police to stop the violence. The Muslims and Christians apparently had pitched battles all throughout the day. The Muslims went to Christian areas and burned and destroyed things and killed people and the Christians retaliated.

On that Monday night, one of our friends here in Jos, the general secretary of ECWA, Rev. Dr. Osake called one of his very close friends in Kaduna who was a pastor and a church leader to check on him. This person told him that he was going to try to get out of Kaduna the next day and come to Jos because it was not safe in Kaduna. Osake encouraged him to do so. However, just a few minutes after he got off the phone, the Muslims came to his house, killed him, cut him up in pieces and burned the parts of his body.

The Baptist Seminary is on the north end of Kaduna in a place known as Kowe. I have been there at least once. My colleague, Dr. Ilori, has been the chairman of the board of the seminary for many years, only recently stepping down from that position. Apparently this was a target of the Muslims. They came to the seminary and, finding the gates locked, went over the wall. Upon getting inside, they burned all of the buildings of the seminary except six residences on the backside of the campus. There was only one missionary who lived on campus but, fortunately, she was in Ghana at that time. We saw her today at a restaurant. She had just flown into Jos and was heading up that way tomorrow. However, there was a missionary family on campus at the time. A Baptist missionary doctor had just returned from a conference in Nairobi and had spent the night in Kaduna at the seminary. During the night the Muslims came. He and his wife and other members of the staff had to crawl over the back wall while the Muslims were attacking the front wall. They then trekked through the bush to the Air Force base, which was about a mile or so away and were saved. Unfortunately, three of the seminary students were killed. Also a night guard and two or three others from the seminary were killed. For some reason that no one can explain, the Muslims did not attack the six houses on the back part of the campus though they could be seen during the dry season. There were several pictures of the burned seminary in the newspaper today including one of some of the bodies of students lying in the burned out rubble.

A lawyer friend with whom I work on the AIDS project came to my house last night and told me more about what went on in Kaduna. Apparently after the initial attack in Kaduna, the Igbos in Kaduna called their relatives in the East and many of them got vehicles and came up to Kaduna. And on Tuesday, the Christians really went on the warpath. They went through Kaduna and burned everything associated with Muslims that they could find. Most of the filling stations in Kaduna are owned by Muslims. They were all destroyed. Also nearly all petrol tankers are owned by Muslims. All of them were torched. There are many automobile dealers in Kaduna. Hundreds of vehicles were burned, both new and used. Also all commercial buildings owned by Muslims were burned. They also moved into Muslim residential areas and burned houses and killed people. Apparently some Muslims had gone to one of the mosques to defend it. However, they were overwhelmed by the Christians and all were killed and the mosque was burned. Apparently they had hand grenades and at least some other weapons. Pius, my friend, estimated that at least 700 people had died. The newspaper I saw today estimated that 300 bodies had been found but the Muslims take and bury their dead immediately. If Pius is correct then the Muslims actually suffered many more casualties than the Christians did and they also suffered for more economic damage.

Pius explained that these rich Muslims are the ones who finance all of these uprisings. They control certain parts of the economy so they can bring even the government to its knees. Apparently one of the goals of the Christian fighters was to destroy the Muslim economic infrastructure and take away at least some of their ability to finance these uprisings. And it appears that they were at least partially successful.

For a person to properly understand this crisis, I need to add two additional words of explanation here. First, in 1987, the Muslims planned and carried out a vicious secret

attack on Christians in Zaria, which is only about forty miles from Kaduna. They went through Zaria and burned every church in the whole city (about 150) with the exception of the chapel on the military base. My colleagues, Yoilah and Roslyn Yilpet were in Zaria at that time. Fortunately their lives and property were saved by a sympathetic Muslim neighbor who lived in the same compound with them. There had been many attacks on Christians for many years up to this time and the Christians had always responded in a non-violent way. However, after the Zaria attacks in 1987, Christian leaders got together and sent word to the Muslims that they had turned the other cheek for the last time. They were never going to start any kind of violence but if the Muslims ever started any kind of violence against them, they were going to respond in kind. They basically took an Israeli kind of approach. "If you kill one Christian, we are going to kill ten Muslims. If you burn a church, we will burn ten mosques." And that has basically been the approach during these last few years. Every one of the incidents I described above was started by some kind of Muslim violence but every one of them was "finished" by the Christians.

In fact, in the PFN meeting I referred to earlier where I heard the official report of the casualties of the Kano riots, there was another part of the meeting that also intrigued me. In the first part of the meeting, I felt like I was sitting in a meeting of first century church leaders hearing about the persecution of the church and the relief efforts that were going on to help them. That made me proud that I could be in Nigeria at this time and be able to witness first-hand this amazing phenomenon. However, after they finished that part of the meeting, they started talking about what to do to "protect their churches." They were talking freely about organizing the men of their churches to resist the attacks of the Muslims. And in that part of the meeting, I felt like I was sitting about a nineteenth century African village war council where the warriors were drawing up their attack strategies. In all fairness, nearly everything that was said that day was defensive. And some of it was even humorous. Pastors were urged to get a dump truck load of stones dumped on their church property because when the Muslims came to burn their churches, the men of the church could drive them away by throwing the stones at them. They were also urged not to throw away old "head pans." These are the large pans that ladies carry on their heads to market which can contain anything from tomatoes to rice to corn to anything else. They are about two feet across. The PFN leader said that these old head pans make good shields against the stones and arrows that would be thrown by the Muslims. I was surprised about how militant these Pentecostal preachers sounded.

The second issue is that these are not exclusively "religious" crises. They are probably more ethnic clashes than they are religious. For example, the Hausas who are the majority tribe in the northern part of Nigeria happen to be Muslims. However, there are dozens of smaller tribes who speak Hausa as a second language but most of these people happen to be Christians. They have been dominated by the Hausa Muslims for the last century and they have hated it the whole time. The violence often focuses on religious symbols such as churches or mosques but the problems between these various groups go far beyond their religions. These religious issues simply serve as a catalyst for the animosity to decades old animosity to boil over. Though I don't have any kind of

objective research to make these statements, I would guess that these conflicts are three parts ethnic and one part religious.

A specific illustration of this “no-more-turn-the-cheek” policy was demonstrated about five years ago in Zango-Kataf, a town in the southern part of Kaduna State. The problem started over whether or not to move the market from the center of town, an area the Muslims controlled, or move it to the outskirts of the city which was controlled by the local Kataf people who happened to be Christians. This issue had been brewing for some time. One day the Muslims brought several truckloads of outsiders into the town to reinforce the local Muslims. They then went out in one of the neighboring fields and attacked a local farmer. This, of course, caused the relatives of the man to respond by attacking the Muslims. The Muslims then unleashed their planned attack on the Christians who had “provoked” them. They had brought in some sophisticated weapons including machine guns. However, apparently they did not know how to use them very well.

I preached up in this area on one occasion and some of the local Christian pastors took me to the town and showed me exactly what and where the things happened. They had several former and retired soldiers among the local people. The machine guns were set up in the middle of the town. The local Kataf people divided themselves into two groups, one on each side of the machine gun. One group would raise up and shoot one of their local guns and then duck down and take cover. The machine gunner would then turn and indiscriminately shoot in that direction. While they were doing that, the group on the other side of the guns would move up toward where the gun was firing. They would then take a shot or two from that side. The machine gun would turn and start firing in that direction. The people on the other side would then advance toward the gunners. Eventually the two sides got close enough to the machine guns that they were able to take out the inexperienced gunners and capture the guns.

Now these were former soldiers who did know how to use this equipment. Apparently they captured plenty of ammunition also. They assembled the local people and with the help of these sophisticated guns they started going through the town which was largely filled with Hausa Muslims. They systematically burned every house and building and killed everyone they came to. Some of these same people took me through the town a couple of years after this incident and it was just like it was on the day they burned it. Nothing had been rebuilt. The town was totally destroyed. The estimates is that about 20 Christians died in this incident but over 400 Muslims died in the crisis. It was “started” by the Muslims but “finished” by the “Christians.”

The same thing can be said about practically every one of the other crises. The Muslims initiated the violence in Kano, which started over the Bonnke crusade, but the local Igbos and Yorubas were ready for them and killed and destroyed more property of Muslims than was destroyed among the Christians.

I do not support this kind of retaliation. First, it is contrary to the teachings of Jesus. Whether we like it or not, Jesus does teach us to turn the other cheek to our

enemies. The reasons that Christians give for retaliation are not based upon the Bible. Second, I don't think that even if Christians get the better of the Muslims, that is the right policy. I think it makes evangelism much more difficult and gives a totally warped view of Christianity. I personally believe that Muslim evangelism has been set back at least a decade by this Kaduna riots. Third, violence nearly always brings about more violence. Human nature demands some kind of response when innocent people died. Fourth, in these retaliations, it is not only the "guilty" people who are being hurt. For example, I am sure that 90 percent of the Muslims who died in Kaduna earlier this week were perfectly innocent people who had nothing to do with the riots just like 90 percent of the Christians were innocent victims. All that the Christians managed to do was to further infuriate the Muslims and create more hatred and animosity and encourage the Muslims to think about revenge, if not now, some time in the future.

I am not a politician or a historian or a sociologist and I do not claim to have all the answers to these difficult problems. Certainly Muslims should be allowed to practice their religion to the extent that it will not interfere with Christians and worshippers of other religions freely practicing their religions. No religious activity should be forced upon anyone because religion is first and foremost a voluntary exercise. This is a country, which has a large percentage of both Christians and Muslims. There has to be religious tolerance on both sides. Otherwise, this cycle of violence is just going to continue on and on.

I believe that Christian and Muslim leaders should meet together in public and make public statements about tolerance and cooperation. They should march down the streets through Muslim and Christian areas arm and arm stating to the whole world that they are not going to allow this violence to continue anymore. Christians should give every opportunity for the Muslim fellow citizens to practice Sharia to the extent that it does not interfere with their practicing of Christianity including the right to evangelize. Christians and Muslims should have the right to compete in the market place of the society for the hearts and minds of the people and let the "best" religion win with free and open competition. If Christianity or Islam has to be promoted or defended by the sword, they are not very good religions.

As for as our own safety, we do not feel insecure here in Jos for a couple of reasons. First, the immediate Jos area is about 80 percent Christian. And the families in Jos are so mixed up with Christians and Muslims that Muslims can not really plan anything without the Christians finding out about it from their Muslim relatives. Apart from the two incidents I referred to above, Jos has been relatively peaceful and had good relations between the Muslims and Christians. The Muslims would be foolish to initiate any kind of crisis here because it is a foregone conclusion they would suffer the most.

Second, I don't think that foreigners are really a target for these people. Of course, mobs do not reason and if a foreign missionary were at the wrong place at the wrong time, he or she could be killed. We have lost missionaries and other foreigners to armed robbers but I don't think I have heard of any foreigner who has died in any of these religious conflicts during the last twenty years. Perhaps it will happen one of these

days but we pray not. When I was in the middle of the crisis in Kafanchan, we were being challenged at every checkpoint by these young teenage boys. However, the older men in the group would say, “Allow them to pass; they are not a part of this problem.”

This situation does illustrate that missionaries do face dangers that most people in America or Europe do not face. American missionaries did have to flee over the wall during this incident and run through the bush to save their lives. As much as I travel, without God’s mercy, it is inevitable that I will run into some violent situation one of these days. However, “*the king’s business requireth haste.*” We do not have the luxury of sitting around and waiting until everything is safe and easy before doing the Lord’s work. The missionaries before us risked their lives and many of them gave their lives to plant the gospel here in Nigeria. It is not inconsistent with God’s strategy that some of us risk our lives to strengthen the body of Christ and help it advance to the next level of development. In fact, it is a joy and a privilege to do so.

It was three weeks ago today that the Kenyan Airways flight crashed with at least two Canadian missionaries and several major Christian leaders here in Nigeria aboard. One of the phrases that was thrown about during that time was the “God’s economy of resources.” From our human point of view, it seems like a very big waste to allow such valuable and useful people to be lost to the kingdom of God when we know that God could have prevented it. However, “God’s economy of resources” is not the same as ours. God does not exempt his people from the normal problems of life. In addition, the kingdom of God has always gone forward on the sacrifices of God’s people. Those of us who are on or near the front lines recognize and accept the risks we face. Should our services to the Lord be cut short, we know and we trust that our families understand that our lives have been fuller than most. I have lived more life and enjoyed more experiences and been involved in more projects and, some would argue, have accomplished more in my twelve years in Africa than many church leaders will experience during their entire lifetimes. If our friends want to feel sorry for people, they should feel sorry for those who live routine and average lives. They should envy those of us whom God has called to these somewhat risky and cutting edge ministries. And they should pray for us and our families. They should pray that God protect us from all kinds of dangers and give us many years of useful service to Him. And should we fall in harm’s way, they should pray that we might demonstrate the love and grace of God in whatever situation we might find ourselves.

Things are normal here in Jos. We have had classes all week here in Jos while these problems have been going on in Kaduna about 150 miles away. Things may be a bit more tense but I drove through the middle of the Muslim area today and things were perfectly normal.

(A few days later)

Unfortunately, the violence did not end in Kaduna. Three or four days later, the Igbos from the south took a trailer-load of bodies to Aba for burial. Aba is about forty miles north of Port Harcourt where we used to live. These bodies inflamed many of the

local Igbos and they went on the warpath against the Hausa Muslims who lived in Aba. These same thing was repeated in Umhuia and Owerri and other Igbo cities. And, unfortunately, at least another 400 people died in these retaliations, nearly all Muslims.

In anticipation of possible retaliation from the Hausa Muslims, thousands of Igbos have been pouring out of the cities in the north, heading south. This is exactly what happened prior to the civil war in Nigeria in 1966. The president, Olusegun Obasanjo, addressed the nation last night, Wednesday, March 1, 2000. He had personally visited Kaduna. He was a civil war commander and hero. He stated that Kaduna looked like a war zone and that this was the most destructive crisis in Nigeria since the civil war. He rebuked religious leaders for allowing these things to go on in the name of religions that preached peace. He also assured anyone considering further violence that the government was very well qualified to deal with them and that perpetrators of violence would be dealt with to the full extent of the law.

Also, since this violence, the new democratic senate gave to President Obasanjo the right to declare a state of emergency in any state or area where he deemed it necessary. When that happens, the local elected officials are suspended and the federal government runs the government. This is a very heavy weapon.

On Tuesday, the president met with all governors and the northern governors decided to suspend all attempts to introduce Sharia into their states right now and those states which have approved it will revert back to the status quo before its implementation. I am sure that they were not very happy about this but having the possibility of having your state declared in a state of emergency is a pretty good motivation to bring your state in order. Whether or not this is enough to bring this problem under control or not, no one knows.

Yesterday, we had our weekly prayer meeting with the Covenant Keepers leaders at 7:00 AM. It became obvious to us during that meeting that God was calling us to do some writing and teaching on this area of Christians and persecution and violence. We need to have a very clear Nigerian position on this issue. God has given us the experience to know how to do it through all of our work on the Nigeria Covenant and the Covenant Keepers material we have developed. Though the Congress on Christian Ethics state chapters and Covenant Keepers contacts, I believe God has also given us a forum that will help to disseminate this information. During the meeting, it was like another heavy load descended upon the six of us who were in the meeting. Perhaps all of our work in developing materials related to ethics in Nigeria was only a warm-up and preparation for us to develop materials and strategies for retraining Christians and Christian leaders in the proper Christian response to all of this violence. May God give us wisdom and time to be able to do our part.

I am sure that we have not heard the end of this story. However, we pray that God will raise up Christian and Muslim leaders who will be men and women of courage and wisdom and will not be afraid of taking a clear and positive stand to bring peace and justice to this troubled nation.

=====**XXX**

Dad, I sort of promoted your Sharia approach to the ANA and am getting some interesting responses which might be useful for your research. This is one of them.

----- Original Message -----

From: OWOLABIE <OWOLABIE@mopipi.ub.bw>

To: 'Wiebe Boer' <mai_gona@hotmail.com>

Cc: <ana-ga@eGroups.com>

Sent: Thursday, March 02, 2000 9:37 AM

Subject: RE: [ana-ga] my two kobo on Sharia

>

> Wiebe,

> As I suspected, I hope we are not treading on slippery grounds here. I

> admit we Nigerians hold tenaciously to our old cultural ethnic and religious

> biases, irrespective of the level of our education. This is why I have been

> very careful not to dabble into the sharia 'tension'. This is also why I

> have been praying that ANA would not dabble into it too. The so-called

> western laws are not christian laws! The judges and justices have never

> claimed their powers and interpretations from the bible! Rather, they have

> always based their judgements on the constitution and laws of the country.

> Appying Sharia law is different from islamising a state and using state

> funds to promote one religion at the expense of the others!

> All these arguments that no christian would be affected should be told to

> the marines. Using state money to set up the sharia system, preventing

> christians from selling and drinking alcohol and preventing christians from

> preaching their doctrines during evangelical outings etc etc, all amount to

> double-speak. For instance, No Nigeria's law says you can not sell or drink

> alcohol! Sharia courts have always been in existence, but specific

> promulgating sharia laws for a state are somethings new. In my extended

> family in Ijebu-Ode, we are nearly fifty:fifty christians and muslims and

> we enjoyed the best of two worlds as kids as we relished and celebrated all

> the festivals round the year. So I respect and love Muslims as much as I do

> for Christians.

> What sharia Governors have done, pure and simple, is to islamise their

> states. This is contrary to Nigeria's constitution and akin to treason.

It

> is infact the first step to seccesion, yet they cry for and insist on "one
> Nigeria" from the roof top!
> Wiebe, don't misunderstand me, I mean no harm and we remain friends. I
only

> don't agree with your submissions on sharia.

> .

> Dr. Emmanuel O. Owolabi,
> Department of Physical, Health Education & Recreation,
> P. O. Box 70120,
> University of Botswana,
> Gaborone. BOTSWANA.
> Tel. (267) 3552553, 3552400. Fax: 585096; Tele/fax: 324905 (Home)

>

>> -----Original Message-----

>> From: Wiebe Boer [[SMTP:mai_gona@hotmail.com](mailto:mai_gona@hotmail.com)]

>> Sent: Wednesday, March 01, 2000 10:37 PM

>> To: owolabie@mopipi.ub.bw

>> Subject: [ana-ga] my two kobo on Sharia

>>

>> It does no good for Nigeria for an organization like ANA to come out
being

>> so hostile to Sharia law, especially when you consider that if we are
>> representing Nigerians, then we should also represent the Muslim view
even

>> if that view is not well represented within this body.

>>

>> To the average Muslim, the so-called secular state system which governs
>> Nigeria is a Christian state system since it comes from the West.

Whether

>> that is true or not is not the issue, because that is the perception.

>> From

>> that context, it would seem perfectly fair that Muslims should be
allowed

>> to

>> have Sharia law if they want since Christians already have a Christian

>> legal

>> system in place. Contrary to what conspiracy theorists might think, I

do

>> not think that Sharia is an organized plot to destabalize Nigeria. It

is

>> the attempt by Muslims to come to terms with the fact that African

>> governments have been unable to create state systems that really address

>> the

>> huge importance of religion in African life.

>>

> > If we look at it from this perspective, the Sharia issue can open a door
 > > for
 > > debate about the role of religion in African politics. All the hostile
 > > talk
 > > only makes the potential conflict worse. We should call for dialogue
 not
 > > revenge if we really want to find a way forward.
 > >
 > > Yours,
 > > Wiebe

=====
 =====xxx

From: Nubi Achebo <kitua@wwa.com>

Nigerian president scraps sharia law in three states

11:38 ET

Deutsche Presse-Agentur

Copyright (c) 2000, dpa

Abuja (dpa) - Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo Tuesday scrapped Islamic law in three northern states after its introduction had triggered violent religious clashes.

The country was reported extremely tense amid reports of new clashes between Christians and Moslems in the worst crisis since a civilian government took power last year

Radio reports said Nigerians were gripped by fear, and hundreds of civilians had sought refuge inside military facilities for fear of new killing sprees.

About 50 people were killed in the town of Aba in the southeast, reports early Tuesday said. Some 400 people were reported killed last week in the northern town of Kaduna.

Obasanjo called a meeting in the capital Abuja with the governors of Nigeria's 36 states as well as army and security forces commanders.

Radio reports said the government hopes the decision to declare sharia law invalid in the three northern states will end the clashes between Christians of the Ibo people and the Moslem Hausa.

A curfew was imposed in Aba where gangs of Christian youths from the Ibo ethnic group were said to be attacking Moslems.

Eyewitnesses described scenes of horror and anarchy in Aba, saying that Ibo youths were dragging members of the Moslem Hausa group from their cars and killing them on the spot, chanting slogans of ``revenge for Christian victims in Kaduna".

A government report said a mosque had been torched, and charred corpses were lying in the streets.

Security forces in northern and southeastern Nigeria were in a state of alert because it was feared that the clashes would spread to other cities.

Obasanjo, speaking earlier in Kaduna, had called on the people to end hostilities immediately. The government sent elite troops from Port Harcourt to restore order in Aba.

The president appealed to Christians and Moslems to desist from violence, insisting that both Islam and the bible preached tolerance and love.

Several states in northern Nigeria, the most populous nation in Africa with 110 million people, are introducing strict Islamic sharia law, which has provoked angry reactions from minority Christians.

In last week's clashes, large sections of Kaduna was reported destroyed and radio reports said thousands of people have fled the city.

According to informed sources the death toll is probably much higher than the official figure of 400.

Analysts said the move to spread Islamic law is encouraged particularly by conservative northern politicians who are close to the military junta that was deposed last year, when Obasanjo and a civilian government took power.

Observers feared that the religious dispute has already turned into an ethnic conflict. They recalled the civil war in Biafra 30 years ago between the Ibo and Hausa in which one million people were killed.

North Nigerian governors back down on sharia - VP.

09:54 ET

Reuters English News Service

(C) Reuters Limited 2000.

ABUJA, Feb 29 (Reuters) - Nigerian Vice-President Atiku Abubakar said on Tuesday northern states had agreed not to pursue strict Islamic sharia law, an issue which has helped trigger a wave of unrest in which hundreds have died.

"We agreed that no state should amend the penal code. It should be operated as it is in the constitution and this has been agreed by the northern governors," Abubakar told reporters after an emergency meeting of governors and security chiefs in Abuja.

Hundreds of people died in Kaduna State last week in riots between Christians and Moslems demanding the introduction of a sharia penal code along the lines of its adoption in other northern states.

Scores more have died in backlash riots in southeast Nigeria in the past two days.

The violence has cast serious doubts over the long-term future of Africa's most populous nation and its less than one-year-old democracy under President Olusegun Obasanjo.

"In order to restore normalcy and create confidence among all communities it was decided and agreed that as far as sharia is concerned we will now revert to the status quo," Abubakar said.

Nigerian Pres Meet Top Govt Officials Over Violence

09:46 ET

Dow Jones International News

(Copyright (c) 2000, Dow Jones & Company, Inc.)

ABUJA, Nigeria (AP)--President Olusegun Obasanjo was meeting Tuesday with top government officials as fighting between Christians and Muslims spread to Nigeria's Southeast.

The Council of State, a gathering of Nigeria's 36 governors, top security officials and federal politicians, were summoned to this central capital city to try to find a solution to the crisis.

A presidential aide said Obasanjo may urge Muslim leaders to tone down their calls for sharia, or Islamic law, which has triggered the fighting.

Obasanjo believes that "given the current tension and violence, nobody should be talking about sharia, at least for now," said the aide, who spoke on condition of anonymity. "The idea is that those behind the sharia should recognize that the future stability of this country will depend on what we all want to make of it."

The meeting, which may last into Wednesday, comes a day after at least 30 people were killed in the eastern city of Aba. Those attacks came in revenge for bloody clashes last week in the northern city of Kaduna.

The violence in Aba, about 600 kilometers east of Lagos, had been brought under control by late Monday night by a large deployment of soldiers. But the city remained very tense, residents said by telephone. The Lagos-based Punch newspaper said at least 30 people had been killed and two more died in similar fighting in the nearby town of Owerri.

=====

Kitua Inc. - Information Brokers

<http://www.crosswinds.net/~kituainc/kit.htm>

=====xxx

Good news! A direct answer to many prayers!

-----Original Message-----

From: Nubi Achebo On Behalf Of Nubi Achebo

Sent: Tuesday, February 29, 2000 11:45 AM

To: Naija-news

Subject: [Naija-news] News Flash!

From: Nubi Achebo <kitua@wwa.com>

Nigerian president scraps sharia law in three states 11:38 ET Deutsche Presse-Agentur Copyright (c) 2000, dpa Abuja (dpa) - Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo Tuesday scrapped Islamic law in three northern states after its introduction had triggered violent religious clashes.

The country was reported extremely tense amid reports of new clashes between Christians and Moslems in the worst crisis since a civilian government took power last year

Radio reports said Nigerians were gripped by fear, and hundreds of civilians had sought refuge inside military facilities for fear of new killing sprees.

About 50 people were killed in the town of Aba in the southeast, reports early Tuesday said. Some 400 people were reported killed last week in the northern town of Kaduna.

Obasanjo called a meeting in the capital Abuja with the governors of Nigeria's 36 states as well as army and security forces commanders. Radio reports said the government hopes the decision to declare sharia law invalid in the three northern states will end the clashes between Christians of the Ibo people and the Moslem Hausa. A curfew was imposed in Aba where gangs of Christian youths from the Ibo ethnic group were said to be attacking Moslems. Eyewitnesses described scenes of horror and anarchy in Aba, saying that Ibo youths were dragging members of the Moslem Hausa group from their cars and killing them on the spot, chanting slogans of "revenge for Christian victims in Kaduna".

A government report said a mosque had been torched, and charred corpses were lying in the streets.

Security forces in northern and southeastern Nigeria were in a state of alert because it was feared that the clashes would spread to other cities.

Obasanjo, speaking earlier in Kaduna, had called on the people to end hostilities immediately. The government sent elite troops from Port Harcourt to restore order in Aba.

The president appealed to Christians and Moslems to desist from violence, insisting that both Islam and the bible preached tolerance and love.

Several states in northern Nigeria, the most populous nation in Africa with 110 million people, are introducing strict Islamic sharia law, which has provoked angry reactions from minority Christians. In last week's clashes, large sections of Kaduna was reported destroyed and radio reports said thousands of people have fled the city.

According to informed sources the death toll is probably much higher than the official figure of 400.

Analysts said the move to spread Islamic law is encouraged particularly by conservative northern politicians who are close to the military junta that was deposed last year, when Obasanjo and a civilian government took power. Observers feared that the religious dispute has already turned into an ethnic conflict. They recalled the civil war in Biafra 30 years ago between the Ibo and Hausa in which one million people were killed.

Copyright (c) 2000, dpa

=====

Kitua Inc. - Information Brokers

<http://www.crosswinds.net/~kituainc/kit.htm>

==XXX

From: Nubi Achebo <kitua@wwa.com>

Tuesday, February 29, 2000

Reprisal violence in Aba claims lives

>From Joseph Ollor-Obari and Gordi Udejah (Aba)

MANY lives were feared lost yesterday in a violence that erupted in

Aba, apparently in response to last week's killings in Kaduna State over the proposed adoption of the Sharia.

The Central Mosque was torched in the riot that pitched Igbo youths against persons they perceived to be moslems. In the process, some persons whose identities were not immediately ascertained were affected.

Tempers flared in the Abia State centre of commerce when residents sighted bodies being discharged from a luxury bus returning from the North, which they believed to be those of victims of the Kaduna violence.

The rioters, who were predominantly youths, moved to the streets to avenge the Kaduna killings. They moved through streets in the heart of the city such as Asa Road, Azikiwe Road, Jubilee Road, Hospital Road and Ariaria.

Eye witness accounts said some victims were set ablaze. Bodies were seen on Jubilee, Market, Hospital and Faulks Roads, as well as in the Ogbor Hill area.

The police reportedly had a difficult time controlling the situation. Teargas was freely used, but that did not stop the rioters from torching the Central Mosque.

No fewer than 10 road blocks were mounted by the angry youths on the route from the North. At Obinze, some bodies were found at a road block. Lorries were also burnt at the overrail, on the outskirts of Aba where a majority of the Hausa reside.

On the streets around the main park area of Aba, charred bodies of victims lay.

All business premises were combed as the rampaging youths searched for their targets. As night fell, tension rose with more youths pouring on the streets.

Police presence in the thick of the riot was negligible. But a truckload of anti-riot policemen was sighted about 30 kilometres from Aba on the road to Port Harcourt heading towards the troubled city.

The riot spread to the outskirts towards Owerri and up to the boundary with Rivers State as the youths seemed determined to comb the whole of Abia State for their perceived enemies.

Some said they were particularly angry because they heard that a renowned footballer, Uche Okechukwu, was killed in Kaduna.

Chief Press Secretary to the Abia State Governor, Mr. Chukwudi Nwabuko, confirmed that there was "a little problem" that led to the death of an unknown number of persons.

Nwabuko told The Guardian on telephone that no motive had been established for the crisis in Aba, although there had been reports suggesting violent reactions in some state capitals in the East over the Sharia related killings in Kaduna State yesterday.

He said from Umuahia: "We learnt there was a little problem in Aba, but we have not been able to establish a definite motive for it. The Abia State government has been in touch with the police authorities to bring the situation under control. We learnt that there is a similar situation in other state capitals".

When contacted, the state police Public Relations Officer, Mr. Kunle Akinwale, an Assistant Superintendent of Police told The Guardian in Umuahia that details of what happened in Aba were still being awaited. He promised to brief the press when all such reports would have reached the state police command headquarters.

Hundreds of people were killed in two days of clashes between Moslems and Christians in Kaduna State last week.

==

Protest in Owerri over Kaduna Killings

DEMONSTRATORS poured onto the streets of Owerri, the Imo State capital yesterday as news filtered in from Aba that bodies of some Igbo killed in the Kaduna Sharia-related violence had arrived in the commercial city.

No casualties were, however, recorded as the police quickly brought the situation under control.

The Owerri violence erupted after news came that the arrival of a lorry-load of the bodies in Aba had engendered great resentment and spontaneous reaction from people in the Abia State commercial nerve-centre.

As a result, the ethnic army, popularly known as Bakassi, took over the streets, at about 5.50 p.m. attacking some moslems in the town.

This prompted northerners in Owerri, especially the petty traders to flee their shops and houses, some of which were sacked by the rioters.

In the ensuing melee, hoodlums took over but there were no killings.

The rioters made bonfires with old tyres on the roads.

But they were dispersed by the police who patrolled the streets, shooting into the air.

Efforts by The Guardian to speak with the Imo State Police Commissioner on the issue failed as his personal assistant said he was not in the office.

He said that apart from the commissioner, other senior police officers were working round the clock to see that the situation returned to normal.

He hinted that police teams and units had been sent to other parts of the state, especially Okigwe which has a large Hausa population.

He added that some of the policemen were in plain clothes for effective monitoring and control of the situation.

Obasanjo berates leaders over crisis

>From

Saxone Akhaine,

Kaduna

PRESIDENT Olusegun Obasanjo has expressed dissatisfaction with the attitude of political, community and religious leaders to the crisis in Kaduna. He, however, assured that the country will remain indivisible in spite of the crisis.

The president who was on an assessment tour of the crisis-ravaged areas of the Kaduna metropolis yesterday expressed shock over the level of human carnage and destruction of property.

Accompanied by the acting governor of Kaduna State, Mr. Stephen Shekari, President Obasanjo who arrived in Kaduna city at 1.20 p.m. visited places like Rigasa, Kabala West, Angwuan Muazu, Sabo Tashan and Television village where the militant youths unleashed terror on

residents.

Others who accompanied the President were the Chief of Defence Staff, Vice Admiral Ibrahim Ogohi, PDP National Chairman, Chief Barnabas Gemade, Internal Affairs Minister, Chief Sunday Afolabi, Minister of State for Works and Housing, Mr. Isaiah Balat, and the Minister of Youths and Sport, Mr. Damishi Sango.

President Obasanjo who later addressed religious, traditional and community leaders at the State House, Kawo said: "I feel very sad for what I have seen because I could not imagine the magnitude of destruction that took place last Monday and Tuesday".

"As somebody who had his early military life here in Kaduna and developed here, you can imagine how I feel seeing the destruction. I asked myself what this is. Is it done for religion or against religion? Whatever that religion must be condemned. Whoever did it for that religion must be condemned".

Specifically, President Obasanjo who pointed out that those responsible for the destruction of lives and property must also be condemned, stressed that, "as I went round with the Deputy Governor and he was briefing me, I was speechless and I asked how long had people been planning this?"

He queried in an emotion-laden tone: "Was it pre-planned or it was spontaneous? Was it the handiwork of hoodlums who hijacked what would have been a peaceful demonstration?"

The President then observed: "One thing is clear; Christianity or Islam, whatever religion we proclaim our leaders have failed."

"Because, if this is done in the name of Christianity or Islam which are religions of peace, love, care and protection, something is wrong. And the first thing is that our leaders have failed and we have to ask God for forgiveness. After God has forgiven us, we have to say to ourselves, how do we make corrections to what has happened?"

President Obasanjo who constantly remarked that he could not believe what he saw said: "I was told that some of those wielding cutlasses and carrying petrol are teenagers."

He asked, his voice quivering: "What has happened in our schools, in our homes that they have become instrument of deaths... When I look round, I feel disheartened by the level of destruction and deaths."

However, the President urged all leaders - religious, traditional and political - to embark on reconciliation moves at the local and state levels to heal the wounds the entire community may be nursing as a result of the crisis.

"What has happened has destroyed the community because people who were your neighbours yesterday suddenly turned against you. Confidence has been shattered. The earlier we work to bring confidence back the better".

Obasanjo also pointed out that what has happened in Kaduna has implications for the whole country. He said: "We must thank those who have achieved that, some religious leaders who stood their ground, political leaders and traditional rulers who worked their hearts out must be commended. But suspicion is still there."

The president wondered how a boy of 13 or 14 could take up a cutlass and hack a man to death. He observed that something must be wrong with the nation's moral values.

He pleaded with leaders to ensure that peace reigned in Kaduna.

The CAN state chairman, Archbishop Benjamin Achighili pledged his group's support for peace and tranquility, while the Jama'at Nasril Islam (JNI) secretary, Alhaji Jafa'aru Makarfi, added that Moslems will ensure that they co-exist with others.

Igbo flee Kano

HUNDREDS of Igbo in Kano, Kano State may have started leaving for their respective states in the South East for fear that violence may also erupt in the ancient city.

Agency reports said they left in cars and coaches loaded with their belongings.

Catholic bishops blame crisis on govt's tardiness

>From Emmanuel Onwubiko, Abuja

GOVERNMENT's failure to take a stand on the promulgation of Sharia law has been cited by the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) as the cause of the riot in Kaduna.

In an eight-paragraph statement by Archbishop John Onaiyekan, the vice

president of the Bishops Conference, the clergymen said: "It is the duty of government to ensure law and order, not only by arresting disorder, but above all by taking steps in time to prevent it breaking out. It is our strong conviction that the present tragedy could have been avoided if government has heeded our warning as contained in our memo to it as early as October 1999. Even now, it is not yet too late for government to take vigorous action to halt this mad rush to national suicide".

Insisting that the introduction of Sharia legal system in some segments of the country was unconstitutional, the clergyman said: "There is no need to pretend that we do not know the cause of the problem. The truth is that Nigeria as we know it cannot sustain a Sharia legal system parallel to the law of the land in any part of the nation. The Nigerian constitution has already carefully circumscribed the limits and scope of the Sharia after long and bitter debate, especially in the 1978 Constituent Assembly. It was a compromise that Christians tolerated at that time for the sake of peace".

Arguing that the action of some state governors, especially that of Governor Ahmed Sani of Zamfara, was illegal and unconstitutional, the Bishops said: "In any case, let it be made clear to all concerned that it is not possible to try to bring in through the back door of state legislation what has already been clearly rejected in the constitution.

"Those who are insisting on this by declaring a wider scope for the Sharia in their states, must bear full responsibility for the conflict situation we now find ourselves in, and for any further degeneration of the situation, let no one underestimate the firm resolve of all Nigerian Christians in this matter".

The Bishop also appealed to Nigerians of all faith and tribes to join hands in building a great nation where all will be equally at home everywhere.

CAN pledges relief to victims

BE thy brother's keeper re-echoed during an inter-denominational service at the weekend in Lagos, when the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) pledged relief materials to their brethren-victims of last week's religious riots in Kaduna.

Speaking during the open-air service, the secretary of CAN's caretaker committee, Rev. George Amu, enjoined unity among Christians, adding that they should "contribute in solidarity to our suffering brethren."

To show their agreement with and commitment to the cause, the congregation collectively contributed to a special offering to assist the victims.

Amu announced that the fellowship of Christian ministers in the state had already pledged N500,000 toward the fund. He assured that all donations to the fund would be sent to Archbishop A.O. Omodunbi, the vice-chairman of CAN's caretaker committee, at Hoares Memorial Methodist Cathedral Church, 321, Herbert Macaulay Street, Yaba, Lagos.

Rev. Monsignor B.A. Okodua, who preached the only sermon, called for Christian unity in response to the prayer of Jesus Christ "that they may be one as Himself and God are one."

Quoting Isaiah 43:10-19, Okodua noted that the people of Israel sinned and suffered but were later pardoned and brought back to the fold.

He remarked that Nigerians were suffering because of "their numerous sins of corruption, nepotism, ethnicity, tribalism and religious intolerance", but noted that God had come to deliver them.

The cleric said, however, that "we need unity to reap the blessings of God; we need one another and we must stay together, our diversity should be a source of strength". Okodua observed that no sin was beyond redemption as long as the people repented.

The President of the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN), Bishop Mike Okonkwo, prayed for the needy and the sick, while Rev. J.S. Jemigbon prayed for Lagos State and Nigeria as a whole.

A News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) correspondent, who covered the service, reported that it was attended by about 3,000 Christians.

Besides different church leaders who led their members to the service, some state dignitaries, including the Speaker of the House of Assembly, Mr. Olorunnimbe Mamora, and a permanent secretary, Mr. L. Odutola, also attended the service.

Lagos State CAN comprises the Catholic, Anglican, Methodist and Baptist churches as well as CPFN, PFN, and Evangelical Churches of West Africa.

Aikhomu deploras violence

>From Abiodun Fagbemi, Ilorin

NIGERIA's successive leaders since independence recognised the volatility of religion and ensured that differences along its line among the citizenry were avoided, former military Vice-President Augustus Aikhomu has said.

Expressing dismay at the seeming penchant of current public officers to ignite a religious crisis in the country, he said such people needed to be re-oriented on governance.

He spoke at the weekend during the wedding ceremony of Governor Mohammed Lawal's daughter, expressing the belief in Nigeria's indivisibility.

While supervising the traditional cake cutting, he said: "No matter what happens, Nigeria is inseparable," adding: "My coming to this programme is not just a coincidence but a significant one."

He spoke further: "The father of the bride retired as an officer of Nigerian Navy. Besides, he is a friend under our leadership while there in government. He has been my friend for some 30 years now.

"Therefore, if I, being a Christian, could be called upon to preside over this aspect of an Islamic programme, where lies the basis for persecution in Nigeria? Let Nigerians follow in this step."

The groom, Lanre Razak, is special adviser to the governor.

Dignitaries at the programme include: Police Inspector-General Musiliu Smith, Brig.-Gen. Adetunji Olurin (rtd), Brig.-Gen. Raji Rasaki (rtd), Minister of State for Health, Aminat Ndalolo, Senators Kuburat Gwadabe and Makanjuola Ajadi and Brig. Gen. David Bamigboye (rtd.)

Others are Governors of Ondo, Yobe, Zamfara, Nasarawa, Kogi, Delta, Sokoto and Borno; Emir of Ilorin, Alhaji Sulu Gambari and Akarigbo of Remo, Oba Michael Sonariwo.

Sharia: Lawyer sues Obasanjo, Agabi

By Ibe Uwaleke, Judicial Reporter

PRESIDENT Olusegun Obasanjo and Justice Minister Mr. Kanu Agabi have been sued by a Lagos lawyer, Mr. Obinna Abiaka, for failing to seek the interpretation of the provision of Sharia in the 1999 Constitution and its adoption by some states in the Northern part of the country.

In an originating motion on notice brought pursuant to Order 46 Rule 5(1) of the Federal High Court Civil Procedure Rules, Abiaka is asking the Lagos High Court for an order of mandamus compelling Agabi to take legal action against Zamfara State and other that have adopted the Islamic law.

The applicant, who is suing for himself and on behalf of the Community Section 1(2) League wants the court to state the constitutionality or otherwise of the introduction of the Sharia by Zamfara and some northern states.

Abiaka also sought the court's nod to be allowed to use the office of the Attorney-General in pursuing the matter as counsel.

He is also asking the court to declare that the Attorney-General, as the chief legal officer of the country, is fit and the proper person to state a case before the Supreme Court against Zamfara State and others and that not to do so amounts to abdication of his constitutional responsibility.

The grounds of the action include:

the full and complete introduction of Sharia in Zamfara State though purported to be permissible under Section 38(1-4) of the constitution, offends sections 10, 34, 40, 41 and 42 of the 1999 Constitution in its practice and implementation;

the Zamfara State government's pronouncements on Sharia law at its inauguration and thereafter, far exceeds the constitutional limits imposed on the applicability of Sharia by the constitution pursuant to Section 244 and 277 therein;

the intended constitutional dispute arising from the introduction of Sharia in Zamfara State is one that will invoke the original jurisdiction of the Supreme Court pursuant to Section 232 of the 1999 Constitution being a dispute between the state and the Federal Government;

the Attorney-General as the principal law officer of the federation pursuant to Section 150 is the only person in law that has standing sue in the instant case; and

the Supreme Court is the court of first instance in any cause or matter between the state and the Federal Government or the states inter se. In a 13-paragraph affidavit in support of the motion on notice, Abiaka

is contending that the complete adoption of Sharia law by Zamfara State contrary to the limited provision on the Sharia in the constitution, sparks of controversy between the state and the Federal Government.

He averred that it is the duty of Obasanjo and Agabi by virtue of their oath of office to defend, protect and preserve the constitution.

The lawyer also stated that Agabi has the onerous responsibility to stem the tide of the controversy arising from the adoption of the canon law of Islam by seeking legal interpretation of its adoption through the courts.

He maintained that it is not enough for Obasanjo and Agabi to posit that the adoption of Sharia law in Zamfara State would die a natural death given that some states have now joined it (Zamfara). He insisted that there are obvious constitutional conflicts to be resolved if the matter is brought before the Supreme Court.

Besides, Abiaka said that it will be in the interest of justice for those residing in Zamfara State, and the strengthening of the constitution if the adoption is subjected to adequate constitutional interpretation.

No date has been fixed for the hearing of the matter.

Kaduna riot is political, says Ojukwu

>From Sunny Igboanugo, Enugu

IKEMBA Nnewi, Chief Emeka Odumegwu-Ojukwu, has described the riot which broke out in Kaduna last week as purely political. He said those giving it religious colouration are missing the vital issue involved.

Though he did not name those behind the crisis, he regretted that the victims were mostly of Igbo origin. "We have, with great pain, heard of the recent tragic circumstance of the events now taking place in Kaduna. We are informed that the arson, looting and brutal killings have already taken the lives of men, women and children. It is further understood that these innocent and unfortunate victims were particularly citizens of Igbo origin.

"I wish as a responsible elder in our society to convey to the families of the deceased and other tragic victims of this incident, my deep felt sympathy. I wish to appeal to the government of the Federal Republic of

Nigeria in general, and in particular the government of Kaduna State, to do everything possible, in the shortest possible time, to restore normalcy to the affected area," Ojukwu said in a statement.

According to him, every effort should be deployed to enable residents go about their businesses with all the necessary protection guaranteed to all citizens by the Nigerian constitution.

The Ikemba added: "There can be no pretence that this matter, subject to this statement, is religious. This is because no religion on earth prescribes and encourages wanton violence and wild abuse of established order. Because, I believe and I do stress that this matter is political, I urge the authorities to take immediate and appropriate steps to curb the political tension which has given rise to this break down of law and order."

Decrying the spate of violence, he said the South-East had repeatedly suffered the anguish of Nigerian unity and would not propose to remain eternal victims. He said the zone had already presented its grievances to the Justice Chukwudifu Oputa Human Rights Commission.

To him, the recent attacks on "our brothers and sisters and indeed our co-religionists is another episode in our unending accused national saga. We are now forced again, to ask, how much more sacrifice do we have to make before we can be embraced as equal citizens of one Nigeria?

"We plead with the authorities to take immediate steps to halt this nasty situation. We plead also to them to made appropriate restitution and compensation for the loss which these tragic incidents have engendered", the Ikemba added.

Appealing for calm on both sides of what he called a "senseless and wasteful conflict", he urged Nigerians to show continued faith in the Federal Government, adding that he still believed in the brotherhood of the country.

Ojukwu, who led the Biafran side in a three-year Nigerian civil war about 30 years ago, preached profusely the need for unity in the country.

He said: "Whilst we still cling to the hope of a united, democratic Nigeria where every citizen is free and equal all over our sovereign territory, let me finally repeat with pride that we believe in Nigerian unity. We urge those who do not believe in this unity to make their feelings known to the authorities in the prescribed manner rather than

the primitive recourse to self- help."

According to him, the present crisis gave the opportunity for all good citizens to speak out in support of peace. "This is the time for true Moslems and true Christians to speak out and condemn this outrage," he added.

=====xxx

----- Original Message -----

From: <Fc.Ogbonnaya@nre.vic.gov.au>

To: <ana-ga@egroups.com>

Sent: Monday, February 28, 2000 4:49 PM

Subject: [ana-ga] The Social and Economic Implications of Sharia Law

> The Social and Economic Implications of Sharia Law
 > by
 >
 > Sam A. Aluko
 > Professor of Economics
 >
 >
 > Contribution to the Seminar Organised by the Chapel of Annunciation,
 > Archbishop Vining College of Theology, Akure, Ondo State, on Sunday, 28th
 > November, 1999
 >
 > -----
 --
 >
 > Introduction
 >
 > 1. The Governor of Zamfara State, Alhaji Ahmed Sani Yerima, proclaimed
 > and launched Sharia Law on Wednesday, October 27, 1999, at a mammoth rally
 > in Gusau, the capital of Zamfara State. It must be remembered that
 > Zamfara State is one of the newest states [CREATED OUT OF SOKOTO STATE]
 > and poorest of the six states created at the same time as Ekiti State was
 > created out of Ondo State in October, 1996.
 >
 > 2. His Excellency, Sani Yerima, declared at the said launching of Sharia
 > that it marked a landmark, not only in Zamfara State but also throughout
 > Nigeria which has a 'majority' of Muslim population. He berated the

> inactivity and docility of the Nigerian Muslims in the past and that the
 > Muslim Ummah in Nigeria had for long been dormant, inactive, and remained
 > in a state of slumber and stupor which had given the impression that the
 > Muslims were a silent majority. The Muslims, Yerima continued, have for
 > long yearned for the freedom to exercise their full rights since the
 > period that they were invaded and colonised by the British. He said that
 > the Muslims only partially achieved victory with Nigeria's attainment of
 > independence in 1960 but that their neglect of planning robbed them of the
 > fruits and practices of the Islamic Order. He declared that he has
 > enthroned Sharia as the acme of the struggles started by the fore-sighted
 > Muslim leaders, particularly the late Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of
 > Sokoto, who once proclaimed that the Muslims would not relent until the
 > Koran was dipped in the Lagoon and in the Atlantic Coast in Lagos. It
 > could thus be assumed that the Governor of Zamfara State was merely a
 > forerunner to the real Sharia fundamentalists and that he floated the idea
 > with a view to testing the pulse of the Nigerians of other faiths.

>
 > 3. The Christian community across the country and the non-muslim,
 > non-indigenes resident in Zamfara State have sharply denounced the action
 > of not only Sani Yerima but also of the general and whole-hearted support
 > which the action has received from leading Muslims, including the
 > ambassadors of almost all the muslim countries in Nigeria. This is the
 > more so, because to the majority of Nigerians, our muslim brothers had
 > been in control of the political and administrative leadership of Nigeria,
 > and by extension its economic policy direction, for a disproportionate
 > period since Nigeria attained independence in 1960. If inspite of that
 > leadership and control, Yerima now regrets the stupor and the inanity of
 > the Muslims to practise their religion in Nigeria.

>
 > We all have cause to worry. If care is not taken and the likes of Yerima
 > are not checkmated, the fragile but holding peace, harmony and religious
 > freedom that had existed in Nigeria will be in great jeopardy. The
 > "Muslim majority" may be out for a grand design either to Islamise
 > Nigeria or throw it into a religio cataclysm that had wreaked havoc and
 > disintegration in some multi-religious countries in some other parts of
 > the world. We must realise that the Sharia is not just a legal system but
 > also a way of life by which Muslim fundamentalists seek to regulate and
 > control their entire religious, social, political, economic, and cultural
 > actions, interactions and reactions even with non-Muslims.

>
 > 4. Governor Yerima has justified his actions with sections under our 1999
 > Constitution (Sections 6 and 38). He has been supported by eminent Muslim
 > lawyers even among us in South-Western Nigeria and from other states
 > outside Zamfara. Since the Sharia issue has been with us since 1978 and
 > it appears to be growing wings, the time is now for Nigerians to address
 > the issue not only of what other faithfuls consider as threats to their

- > own religion but also by trying to understand the main tenets of Sharia
- > and its cooperative legislations. I intend to concentrate only on the
- > Sharia as it impacts on the economic lives of not only the Muslims but
- > also on those who interact or live with them.
- >
- > The Economics of Sharia
- >
- > 5. Let me begin by quoting two incidents from outside Nigeria. Pakistan
- > was created as an Islamic State out of India in 1947. In 1982, during the
- > Military Regime of General (President) Muhammad Zia-Ul-Haq, the Pakistani
- > entire foreign and domestic trade and its financial system and apparatus
- > were threatened to their foundation by a Sharia court ruling. The Islamic
- > High court judges in Pakistan ruled that a set of laws that sanctioned the
- > charging of interest on loans was invalid because it contradicted the
- > Koranic injunction against usury. It required the secular Supreme Court
- > of Pakistan to overturn the judgement of the Sharia judges. In Afghanistan,
- > the Sharia fundamentalists now forbid women from wearing white socks or
- > high heel shoes, because they are considered sexual lucre. Music remains
- > banned, including cassettes in cars. Most forms of entertainment, like
- > movies of any sort, are illegal, and many women, in the name of Sharia,
- > have been prevented from not only pursuing their legitimate occupations
- > and professions but some of them also had been driven to commit suicide,
- > thrown into despair and depression, fled the country or driven back into a
- > mediaeval way of life.
- >
- > 6. The Afghanistan men may not walk the streets unless and until they
- > grow beard of a particular length as the Sharia says that the beard is
- > "wealth from God" and must be worn. Men will not be awarded contracts or
- > be employed unless they wear beard. Since almost all women are "unlucky"
- > not to be endowed with growing beard, they are automatically and
- > permanently ruled out of the economic benefits from the Government
- > contracts of Afghanistan.
- >
- > 7. So, what Governor Sani Yerima has started and against which many
- > Nigerians are protesting is the tip of the iceberg. What are to follow if
- > he succeeds and if he spreads his ideology to other states of our country
- > can only be imagined. The Sharia (Islamic) Economic Ethics and Economics
- > are at times draconic and pervasive.
- >
- > Islamic Economic Ethics and Economics
- >
- > 8. For upwards of ten years, 1968-80, I had the opportunity to serve as
- > one of twelve consultants to the World Council of Churches in Geneva in an
- > organisation which we named "Advisory Committee on Technical Services
- > (ACTS) which has now been renamed "Action by Churches Together (ACT)".
- > The ACTS/ACT tried and continues to try to aid Christian churches

- > worldwide. It was as a member of that organisation that some of us
- > suggested that the time was ripe to intensify dialogues with our brothers
- > and sisters of "other living faiths." One of the most prominent of the
- > faiths is the Muslim faith. We had very close contacts with our Muslim
- > brothers and, today, I have very important Muslim friends across the
- > globe. I learn almost as much of the Koran as I learn and continue to
- > learn about our Christian Bible. So, few Christians are as sympathetic to
- > the Muslim religion as I am. Nevertheless, I never cease to let our
- > Muslim brothers know that in the modern day and age religious fanaticism
- > and the debasement of non-Muslim religious practitioners, including Muslim
- > women, do more damage to the Muslim faith and the the Muslims than ever
- > before.
- >
- > The Two-Fold Nature of Islamic Economics
- >
- > 9. A grasp of the dualism inherent in Islam is essential for the
- > understanding of the ideological basis of Islamic Economics and Islamic
- > Economic Order.
- >
- > (a) On the one hand, Islam is a monolithic religion which, like
- > Christianity, is a set of doctrines which are supposed to be
- > binding on the believer.
- >
- > (b) on the other hand, Islam is also considered to be an official state
- > ideology with the Islamic religion establishing the guidelines and
- > the sets of values and thereby providing the legal basis for the
- > entire political, social and economic spheres of the Islamic state.
- > The Sharia regards Islam as a social order, a philosophy of life, a
- > system of economic principles, a ruling order to which the Muslim
- > believer must conform.
- >
- > 10. Muslims cannot, therefore, operate full Islamic law of Sharia, except
- > in an Islamic State. So, Yerima is less than sincere, when, by launching
- > Sharia, he denies declaring Zamfara an Islamic state. If and when the
- > full Sharia Law becomes operational in Zamfara State in January 2000, we
- > must accept that Zamfara has, ipso facto, become an Islamic state within
- > the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Zamfara State would then be similar to
- > when Christians operated a Theocratic State by which its internal
- > contradictions had to cease when the church and state became separate and
- > the "Protestant Ethics" ceased to be the dominant economic ethics of the
- > modern state. The full Sharia advocates are still living in that 14-16th
- > Century period of the Theocratic State. Just as we Christians lost the
- > battle for theocracy to secularism, I have no doubt that the Muslims
- > will more than lose the attempt to re-enact their own form of the Sharia
- > State.
- >

> 11. In the wake of the re-Islamisation that increased, especially since
 > the 1970s of Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran, Islam became more associated with
 > the idea that the capitalist and the socialist economic systems are alien
 > to the essence of Islam and that a "third force" needs to be fashioned
 > out, based on the Islamic concept of Justice, Fair Distribution of economic
 > resources, property rights, inheritance and the right of "Will" on the
 > death of the muslim. So Islamic economic salvation is being sought
 > through obedience to the old traditional Islamic principles and orthodoxy.
 > Economists have asked, and quite rightly, whether the relative economic
 > backwardness of most of the Islamic countries today is not attributable to
 > their desired to return to traditional, outmoded and impracticable Islamic
 > principles, given the increasing inter-dependence in the world economy and
 > the increasing emphasis on fundamental human rights, particularly of the
 > women vis-a-vis their men folks.

>

> Basic Principles of Islamic Economics

>

> 12. A major factor hindering the spirit of modern economic development in
 > the countries where Islamic rule is sometimes seen in the Islamic belief
 > in the doctrine of pre-destination, and even in magic which crops up in
 > some Islamic suras of the Koran [Sura 2, line 102; Sura 7, line 117; SUra
 > 10, lines 76-81; Sura 20, lines 37-49], though the highest authority in
 > Islam subordinates magic to the will of God.

>

> 13. The Islamic economic ethics rejects undue concern for materialistic
 > accumulation or excessive profit and is more concerned, or enjoined to be
 > more concerned, with the 'lawful' acquisition of goods according to the
 > principles of reward for work done and the social obligations to his
 > community in the use of his wealth for the community well-being. Whether
 > or not the injunction is obeyed is obvious to us in Nigeria today as well
 > as in the recent past.

>

> Contents of Orthodox Islamic Economic Thought and Practice

>

> (i) Direct Taxes

>

> 15. Islam distinguishes between the direct taxation of Muslims and
 > non-Muslims, tax discrimination against non-Muslims being essentially
 > intended to encourage their conversion to Islam. Sometimes, direct levies
 > and taxes, known as Jisyah, which are either a lump sum or a poll tax, are
 > levied on Non-muslims but the amount of the taxes and levies are
 > considerably reduced if and when the tax payers convert to Islam. There
 > are four types of such direct taxes:

>

> 1. Zakat - proportiona tax of about 1/40th of 2 1/2 of income or
 > wealth.

- > 2. Land and yield taxes from property, 1/20th - 1/10th of value
- > (not specifically mentioned in the Koran.)
- > 3. Taxation of Mining and Minerals.
- > 4. Mugataa system - community tax payments.
- >
- > (ii) Indirect Taxes
- >
- > 16. The Indirect Taxes consist of Customs Duties, Consumption taxes and
- > other taxes. Although not all the indirect taxes are provided for in the
- > Koran, import duties can be and are usually levied discriminatingly
- > between Muslims and non-Muslims or between resident Muslim indigenes and
- > Muslim foreigners. For instance, in Iran, during the era of the Sharia
- > fundamentalists, the following import duties were imposed on the value of
- > imports:
- >
- > (a) 10% for foreign non-muslims;
- > (b) 5% for indigene non-muslims
- > (c) 2 1/2 % for Indigene muslims.
- >
- > When the rates rose to 20-30%, pro-rata import duty rates were levied on
- > foreign non-muslim importers, non-muslim indigenes and muslim indigenes.
- > Currently, in Afghanistan, such discriminating taxes are used as
- > instruments of conversion to Islam.
- >
- > Credit, Interest Rate and the Bank Clearing System
- >
- > 17. Trade, money lending and credit financing in return for interest were
- > common in Muhammad times. The prohibition of interest or Riba (from which
- > the Yoruba word 'Riba', bribery) is thus one of the fiercest controversies
- > in Islam. A major reason for this is the definition of interest,
- > established at the time of Prophet Mohammed, and the interpretation to
- > which it was later subjected to by different Islamic scholars. It is
- > tantamount to the discriminatory usury in our Bible (Deuteronomy 23, verse
- > 19, which says that "unto a stranger thou may lend upon usury, but unto
- > thy brother thou shall not lend upon usury.")
- >
- > 18. Riba, in the sense of interest on credit extended for consumption
- > purposes, like our Biblical interest ban on usury, was strictly forbidden
- > for Muslims. However, if interest, in money or kind, is understood to
- > mean profit rate, then, all recognised schools and all modern educated
- > Islamic scholars, with very few exceptions, consider intereste to be
- > compatible with Islamic Laws of Sharia. A loan constitutes an opportunity
- > cost to the lender who should be compensated for the loss in use of his
- > money. The level of interest (profit rate) is determined by the
- > circumstances of the market and/or the rate of returns on investment. The
- > Muslims do not term it "interest" but "profit-sharing." In commerce too,

- > such profit-sharing is considered legal by Islam. (See Psalm 15, verse 5;
- > Proverbs 28, verse 8 which condemn usury. However, see Mathew 25, verse
- > 27, Luke 19, verse 23, which seem to approve usury.) However, if the
- > money is sleeping, as in savings or deposit account, no interest should be
- > paid. Thus, fixed interest-bearing securities, say on treasury bills,
- > bonds, commercial papers or deposits overseas, are not expected to yield
- > interest under Sharia. Speculative money investments in the modern stocks
- > and shares are regarded as gambling and are also condemned by the Sharia.
- >
- > 19. The possibility of creating interest-free banks crops up frequently
- > in recent Islamic economic literature. It forms part of the
- > re-Islamisation measures being propagated or already being adopted by some
- > Islamic countries particularly Pakistan since 1977, in spite of its
- > difficulty to apply and integrate into the normal banking system.
- >
- > Property Law and Law of Succession
- >
- > 20. Property law and re-distribution are two controversial topics in
- > Islamic economics. Private property is basically recognised by Islam in
- > the Koran, the Sunna and the Sharia Law. However, it is subject to
- > certain restrictions regarding the origin of the acquisition of the
- > property and the use of the resultant income. Just distribution is
- > proclaimed, although not between men and women or between male and female
- > heirs to their father's property. Thus, the Koran lays it down that sons
- > get double what daughters receive from inheritance. Not more than 1/3 of a
- > person's wealth may be assigned in advance by means of a Will. According
- > to Sharia Law, such Will is only valid when at least two thirds of the
- > property left behind by the dead Muslim is assigned to charitable causes.
- > A will favouring only one's heirs is forbidden in the Sharia.
- >
- > Distribution and Social Justice in Sharia
- >
- > 21. Islamic Fundamentalists rightly argue that neither hedonistic and
- > individualistic system of capitalism nor the totalitarian collectivist
- > system of socialism does justice to either the individual or to the
- > community as a whole. The negative impact of large accumulation of wealth
- > by a few, particularly on the poor and the less privileged sectors of the
- > population and on the less developed countries of the world, is regarded
- > as un-Islamic, unjust and runs counter to Islamic morals and values. It
- > violates the principles of national solidarity and common purpose which
- > are fundamental principles of Islamic teaching. There are social
- > imperatives to which the uses of property are subordinated. The Muslim is
- > thus enjoined to accept restrictions in the individual use of his property
- > in the interest of the common good. The Muslim is expected to give alms
- > to the beggar, to the poor, and to the needy, and subscribe to or provide,
- > according to his ability and means, for the needs of the community. This

> is why it is often the case that a rich Muslim builds a mosque or mosques
 > for his community or contributes substantially to social and community
 > purposes. The Sharia conundrum enjoins the Muslim to follow a divine code
 > of social justice that will justify his religious beliefs here on earth
 > and attract for him divine favour in the life hereafter through his good
 > works. Islam not only acclaims the good works by Muslims, it also regards
 > good works as the main justification in the eyes of God and warns that not
 > an iota of good works or mischief will be lost on the day of judgement. In
 > Islam, good deeds earn merit with God, regardless of the religious
 > adherence of their doers. Salvation consists of nothing more than good
 > works, unlike the Christians who believe that not good works but the Grace
 > of God leads to salvation in the life hereafter.

>

> Conclusion

>

> 22. So long as the Islamic community remained small and its expansion was
 > limited to the Arabian peninsula, and when economic activities were
 > limited to the subsistence level, it was possible to control the entire
 > behaviour of the Muslims along the lines laid down by Prophet Muhammad
 > in the Koran, the Sunna and the Sharia.

>

> 23. As the Muslim empire expanded and its interactions with the world
 > increased, some of the functions concentrated in the religious leaders by
 > these Muslim revelations had to be separated, because neither the caliphs,
 > the Bahs or the Sultans and the kings were capable of wielding complete
 > religious and political power on their own. It became essential to hand
 > over:

>

> (a) administrative functions to a Prime Minister, Minister, Governor
 > or President;

> (b) Military functions to a Commander-in-Chief;

> (c) Spiritual/religious functions to the Imams, the Ulama and the
 > theologians;

> (d) Judicial matters to Islamic legal officers, many of whom had to
 > apply norms other than those provided only in the Sharia.

>

> 24. As a result, the binding, obligatory interpretation of the Koran and
 > the Sunna along already established principles is no longer tenable, so
 > that their re-introduction in the already mentioned condition of the Ijma
 > remains only an idealistic but impracticable notion. Kemal Attaturk, the
 > founder of modern Turkey, is the ideal leader and hero of the modern
 > Islamic economy. In spite of the fact that Turkey's population is 98%
 > Muslim, Attaturk recognised secularity as the shortest path to rapid
 > economic development and the protection of the minority Christians and
 > Sikhs in Turkey. Today, Turkey is not only a modern state and the most
 > developed in the Islamic World, it is also integrated into mainland

- > Europe. Similarly, countries like Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Palestine,
- > Jordan, Kuwait, Tunisia, Iran and Indonesia (the largest Muslim country in
- > the world, of over 200 million people) have, over the years, embraced the
- > virtues of secularity as a principle of governing a multi-religious and
- > plural society. There are no more than 2 countries in the whole world
- > today where strict Islamic laws and the Sharia are the "Directive
- > Principles of State Policy." They are Afghanistan under the Taleban
- > Muslim Movement, and to an extent, the Royal Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, both
- > of which are not multi-religious countries. The attempt to impose Islamic
- > monotheism in Sudan has led to a seemingly endless war between the Muslim
- > North and the Christian South there.
- >
- > 25. The expanding scope and economic activities of the Islamic empire
- > increasingly make ridicule of any attempt to return to the primordial
- > application of the Sharia Law to regulate and promote the economic affairs
- > of the component states of the organisation of Islamic countries.
- >
- > 26. In 1972, the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) was
- > established. It consisted of 46 states with the following organs:
- >
- > (i) the conference of kings and Heads of States and Governments as the
- > supreme authority, holding a summit every three years; its
- > Headquarters is in Saudi Arabia;
- > (ii) the Conference of Foreign Ministers as the main body for the
- > adoption of resolutions of common interest. The Foreign Ministers
- > meet annually or earlier as and when emergencies demand. Its
- > Headquarters is in Saudi Arabia.
- > (iii) the Permanent General Secretariat in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, which
- > prepares the meetings of the OIC and implements its decisions and
- > resolutions.
- >
- > The resolutions and the declarations of the OIC require 2/3 majority.
- > They become binding for a member state only after its government has
- > ratified them.
- >
- > 27. The Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) pays special attention
- > to economic issues, for which a special department exists to encourage and
- > ensure closer economic relations among the Islamic countries, with a view
- > to an ultimate creation of an Islamic Common Market. The special Economic
- > Department of the OIC has promoted two major agreements among the OIC
- > member states. They are:
- >
- > (a) the General Agreement for Economic, Technical and Commercial
- > Cooperation (GAETCC), signed in 1977, and which became effective
- > in 1981, after being ratified by at least half of the OIC
- > members;

- > (b) the Agreement for the Promotion, Protection and Guarantee of
- > Investments (APPGI) among member states, signed in 1981 but
- > became effective in 1990.
- >
- > 28. The other main economic institutions and agencies set up by the OIC
- > include:
- >
- > 1. Islamic Commission for Economic, Cultural and Social Affairs
- > (ICESCSA) in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia (1975);
- > 2. Islamic Development Bank (in Jeddah), (1975);
- > 3. Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training for Islamic
- > Countries (SESRTIC), Ankara (Turkey), 1977.
- > 4. Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Commodity Exchange
- > (ICCICE), Karachi, Pakistan (1978)
- > 5. Islamic Centre for Vocational and Technical Training and Research
- > (ICVTTR), Dacca, Bangladesh (1978);
- > 6. Islamic Foundation for Science, Technology and Development
- > (IFSTAD), Jeddah, 1978.
- > 7. Islamic Centre for Development and Trade (ICDT), Casablanca
- > (Morocco), 1981;
- > 8. Islamic Research and Training Institute (IRTI), in Jeddah, 1982;
- > 9. International Association of Islamic Banks (IAIB), Jeddah, 1987;
- > 10. Islamic States Telecommunications Union (Jeddah), 1988;
- > 11. Islamic Shipowners Association (Jeddah) 1988;
- > 12. Islamic Cement Union (Ankara, Turkey), 1990;
- >
- > 29. Nigeria remains an observer member of the OIC as our national
- > (Federal) GOVERNMENT has not formally ratified the OIC membership
- > protocols. Also, the Islamic Development Bank membership currently stands
- > at 43, because Brunei, Iran and Nigeria are yet to accede to the
- > membership of the Bank. With all these multifarious agencies in so many
- > countries and interacting worldwide, the application of the Sharia becomes
- > more and more ridiculous for its impossibility.
- >
- > Reforms to Sharia Economics
- >
- > 30. Three types of reforms are necessary if Islam is to move forward
- > economically. They are:
- >
- > 1. the enthronement of secular-liberal policies aimed at bringing about
- > a homogeneous and integrated economy and society;
- > 2. social reform which acknowledges respect for the fundamental human
- > rights of all citizens and the religious freedom and social needs of
- > all citizens, similar to the situations in Iraq, Egypt, Syria,
- > Turkey and Tunisia, Jordan, Kuwait, etc. and
- > 3. the abandonment of undue radical Islamic fundamentalism of Iran,

U.S. Britain warn against violence

ALL hands must be on deck to ensure that Nigeria's fledgling democracy is not aborted by religious and ethnic differences, the United States and Britain have admonished.

Reacting to Monday's sectarian violence in Kaduna between Christians and Moslems over the proposed introduction of Sharia, which resulted in the loss of lives and destruction of property, they urged mutual respect and peaceful resolution of crises by Nigerians.

Addressing journalists in Washington D.C. yesterday, U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright warned that violence could wreak a greater havoc on the country and expressed support for President Olusegun Obasanjo's handling of the development.

She said: "We continue to be very concerned about what is going on and believe that this kind of violence is counter to what President Obasanjo needs to do in order to be able to take his country through this important transition."

She added: "We are talking to the Nigerians and hope very much that he (Obasanjo) is going to be able to get control of it because it certainly is the kind of conflict that complicates his work.

"We support his overall approach to how he is dealing with the problems in Nigeria."

Noting that peace had returned to the Northern city, she said: "I'm just glad that it's quieted down some,"

Nigeria is one of four key U.S. foreign policy priorities for 2000 and Washington has proposed large aid increases for the country in the hope that its democratic transition can serve as a regional model.

U.S State Department spokesman James Rubin, in a reaction posted on the web, said: "We are very concerned about the communal clashes that occurred early this week in Kaduna, Nigeria. We deplore the violence and loss of lives in Kaduna and urge everyone to respect the rights of all Nigerians to find peaceful means to resolve differences".

He added: " We believe that all citizens must find avenues to work together to further their common goals of peace, economic prosperity, tolerance and national unity"

Rubin said what Nigeria needed most at this point in her life was unity, adding that the Kaduna violence and indeed anywhere else in the country could undermine her very existence.

British Foreign Office Minister Peter Hain, in a statement by the country's Deputy High Commission in (Press and Public Affairs Unit), Lagos, spoke in the same direction.

The text reads: "I am deeply concerned at the situation in Kaduna and condemn the violence of the past few days. I am saddened at the reports of deaths. I appeal to all those concerned for calm and for them to settle their differences without recourse to violence.

"I discussed the tensions in the north with Nigerian Foreign Minister, Lamido, on February 14. He assured me then that the Nigerian Government would handle the situation sensitively. He being from the north of Nigeria will be only too aware of the need for the security forces to act in a way that does not further inflame tension.

"I am encouraged that calm has now returned to the city, and I support the Nigerian Government's attempt to engage both sides and reduce tension".

FCID operatives arrive in Kaduna

By Ben Akparanta,

Police Affairs Correspondent

POLICE Force Criminal Investigation Department (FCID) operatives from Abuja and Lagos have arrived in Kaduna to assist the state police command arrest notable perpetrators of the religious crisis in the ancient city.

The General Investigation Department (GID), Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), Criminal Intelligence Bureau and Security Intelligence Bureau are all represented units of operatives currently scouring the nooks and crannies of the city.

The move, it was gathered, was directed by Inspector-General of Police, Mr. Musiliu A.K. Smith, in apparent response to President Olusegun Obasanjo's avowed determination to fish-out perpetrators of the violence.

Obasanjo, in a nationwide broadcast on Wednesday, "had vowed not to

leave any "stone unturned" in "our determination to protect lives and seek out and punish the perpetrators of these terrible atrocities".

Most of the 50 persons arrested so far in connection with the disturbances were picked from scenes of fracas. Pump action rifles, pistols, bows and arrows, daggers and machetes were among weapons found at the scenes by police.

The CIB and SIB are directly supervised by the Inspector-General of Police and are responsible for the daily monitoring of security situation in the country. The special anti-robbery squad personnel are to provide muscle for general investigation officers of the FCID in arresting and questioning suspects.

Igbo warn against attack

>From Sunny Igboanugo,

Enugu

EFFORTS must be made to ensure that the Kaduna riots over the proposal to introduce the Sharia do not degenerate into a human catastrophe. Principally, the Igbo must not be made the target of attacks by fundamentalists.

The Igbo Youth Movement (IYM) stated this yesterday in Enugu, warning of dire consequences if their people were attacked.

According to the group, the Sharia controversy was ignited by anti-government forces which only found an outlet in religion to achieve political goals.

"The carefully orchestrated introduction of Sharia law in the North is a litmus test for a much more sinister agenda... which will unfold soon," a statement by its national president, Elliot Uko, said.

The group expressed the fear that the lives and property of Ndigbo, their Southern brothers and indeed all Christians in that part of the country are no longer safe.

It said: "In view of the above circumstances, Igbo youths will not fold their hands and watch Igbo men and women being butchered in Northern Nigeria again.

"Therefore, the Federal Government of Nigeria, Economic Community of

West African States (ECOWAS), Organisation of African Unity (OAU), Commonwealth of Nations, United Nations (UN) and in fact the whole world is being told in unambiguous terms..."

Deploing the development, it wondered why the Moslem groups attacked the Christian protesters when it had had its rallies unmolested for about two weeks.

Ohaneze laments crisis, asks Obasanjo to uphold constitution

AN Igbo socio-cultural organisation, Ohaneze Ndigbo, yesterday lamented the carnage in Kaduna and called on President Olusegun Obasanjo to "take all necessary actions to uphold the sanctity of the constitution."

The group, in a statement by its Secretary-General, Professor Ben Nwabueze (SAN), said the Kaduna incident "casts ominous shadows on the future of this country."

The statement reads in part: "Ohaneze Ndigbo views with deep concern the adoption of Sharia law in some states in the North and the crisis sparked by it, particularly the current riots in Kaduna State"

"The development is one that casts ominous shadows on the future of this country, considering the irrationality and lack of restraint of actions motivated by religious sentiments. At this crucial phase in our history as a nation when we have embarked upon a fresh experiment in democratic governance after nearly 30 years of military rule, we owe it to ourselves and to our posterity to avoid actions capable of providing an excuse for the military to intrude again into the management of our public affairs.

"Our constitution is clear upon this issue of state involvement in religious matters. It says in Section 10 that the 'Government of the Federation or of a State shall not adopt any religion as state religion"

"We live in an age in which the crusade and the jihad have become anachronistic, an age which demands of the various religions, respect for each other's beliefs and doctrines and of the state, total abstinence from using its power and resources to support, favour or advance one religion in preference to others.

"The power of the President under Section 5 of our constitution to "execute and maintain" the constitution casts upon him a duty to preserve, protect and defend it against acts of a state government violating the secularity or the religious neutrality of the Nigerian state as constitutionally ordained, since the violation of the character of the state in its religious aspect has the potentials of endangering the survival of the constitution and of the nation.

"Ohanaeze Ndigbo, therefore, appeal to Mr. President to take all necessary actions to uphold the sanctity of the constitution which is the bond that holds all of us together as on nation."

=====xxx

Nubi Achebo Feb 25 2000 NaijaNews Guardian News

My mission, by new Anglican Primate

By Martins Oloja, Abuja Bureau Chief

NEWLY crowned Primate of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), Archbishop Peter Jasper Akinola yesterday unveiled his mission to include an empowerment of the clergy and the laity to serve God better and consolidate on the foundation laid by his predecessor, retired Archbishop Abiodun Adetiloye.

He said with his election, Abuja had become the headquarters of the church and disclosed that he was nominated for the post by Bishops of the Igbo origin. Akinola who will be inaugurated on March 25, said there was no division in the church.

The new Primate also berated pro-sharia proponents, insisting that their campaign was meant to undermine the present government.

In his first interview, with The Guardian yesterday in Abuja, the new prelate whose diocese polled 56 votes to beat the other contestant who polled only nine in a peaceful election in Abuja Tuesday night, said he only needed to solidify the expansion left by Adetiloye.

"Papa Adetiloye did what God called him to do. You all know he extended the frontiers of the church. Our need is not much in extension. Our vision is to find the wherewithal to run the dioceses. My first mission is to grab the bull by the horns to empower our bishops to make

dioceses viable to work effectively."

He revealed that there exists "a situation where you have a diocese but the wherewithal is not available to run them."

According to him, "we need to have a new approach to crisis management. Those who know me in Abuja know I won't be distracted. I have no time for fighters in the church."

He asked: "Who are people fighting for? For God? We won't waste time for fighters. We will have time for those who are partners in progress. We don't want to dissipate our energies on fighting and division. God is unity."

He told The Guardian in his office where a message from Zech 4:6, "not by might nor by power.." greets visitors, that the headquarters of the Church of Nigeria was now Abuja while Lagos would be a liaison office.

The primate said his pre-occupation is to work with the laity, the clergy and the Bishops as partners in progress and children of God "to actualise God-given dreams in so far as everyone is prepared to serve Christ."

"By and large," he pledged, "we will call upon everyone to unite for the good of the church and the country. He observed that in any church "where you see division by quarrel devil is at work. Since we are not Satan's children, we should focus on the vision God has given us."

The other area Akinola promises to address is empowerment of all Anglicans to be able to serve (their) God well-"not just the laity, the clergy or the Bishop..."

The new Anglican head dispelled rumours of tribalism and marginalisation in the church. He attributed such reports to politicians whom he advises to return to God. He described the election of Tuesday as a pointer to the unity in the church.

He also disclosed to The Guardian how he was elected. "Irrespective of stories you have been told, the Bishops of Anglican are the best anywhere. We got together around 10 p.m Tuesday night. We first elected five Bishops to fill vacancies in the five provinces. We finished that by 11 p.m. I presided over that as Dean and Acting Primate. I now stepped aside. We invited the Registrar and Chief Legal Adviser of the Church Giwa Amu from Benin, who gave us recommendation of the clergy and the laity as regards qualification for the Primate. That is to the House of Bishops."

He continued: "When it was time for nomination, the Bishops could nominate up to four times. The bombshell: An Igbo Bishop from Province Two (East) got up and nominated Akinola. Another Igbo Bishop seconded the nomination. When the Registrar asked for more nominations, a Bishop from Province One nominated another Bishop from Province Three (North); unfortunately no seconder for that nomination. It was lost.

"The presiding officer called for more nominations. This time a Bishop from Province Two was nominated and seconded by another from Province One (West). After three nominations, no nomination, only two valid nominations."

He revealed that "after 10 minutes, the result was out, 65 bishops voted. You need two-thirds majority (43) to be elected. I polled 56 votes and the other contestant polled nine votes."

Akinola urged the nation to emulate the Anglicians, a church in which according to him, there is no tribal leaning.

"Ours is not a tribal church. Politicians who have been sowing seed should go back and re-plan. We are a truly big and one church. All these talks of marginalisation is not in our church. The Lord has put the question: "Who will be the primate?" The Lord said: "It's Akinola."

On the Sharia controversy the primate asked: "What is the motive? What is the rationale at the time of our national life?"

He said it was curious that moslems were now launching sharia when an elected Christian President was in power. He wondered why the system (Sharia) was not launched when moslem leaders dominated our political life. He said: "Most of our national leaders have always been Moslems. Why not launch Sharia then? Why now that we have a democratically elected Christian president?"

"They want to make the country ungovernable". But he said with a tone of finality: "I make bold to say they will fail in their diabolical plans."

Akinola lashed out at the National Assembly and the police and the armed forces. To him, the police and the armed forces failed the nation for their inability to contain the mayhem in Kaduna. He said they always apply medicine after death."

He remarked that if the religious extremists and their sponsors do not want one Nigeria where we can live in peace, we can sit down round a

table and discuss it to declare: "To thy tent O Israel."

Akinola, who urged the government to leave religion to Imams and Bishops to remove impression that Islam is a state religion.

Scare of violence grips Kano

>From Rhikardo Chidi Obih,

Kano

ROUTINE chores were momentarily disrupted yesterday in Kano amidst a pandemonium occasioned by fears of a spillover of the Sharia related violence in Kaduna.

Business and other activities were briefly paralysed at about 10 a.m. in Kano as alarmed residents closed shops and retreated to safety zones following a rumour of imminent violence inspired by the situation in Kaduna.

The rumour, which thickened on Wednesday, discouraged non-indigenes from passing the night at such areas as Brigade, Kurna-Asabe, Hamadiyya, Badarawa, PRP, Kwana-Jaba, Dakaka and Kwaji. Many temporarily moved house to the Sabon-Gari quarters - an area populated almost exclusively by non-natives.

Traders hurriedly locked up their stalls while schools closed in the thick of speculations of imminent eruption of violence yesterday morning. Parents raced to schools to retrieve their wards, even as motorists confined their movement to specific areas. Civil servants too had much difficulty getting to their offices.

Reacting swiftly to the disruption of activities, the Kano State government warned that it would deal ruthlessly with any person or group caught threatening the peace.

In a statement by the Director of Press, Mallam Sani Mohid Usman, the government noted with concern and dismay the activities of some disgruntled elements aimed at disrupting the peace of the state by fostering unnecessary confusion. Adequate steps, it added, were being taken to deal with the elements.

The statement reassured the public that there was no cause for alarm, advising the residents to go about their normal duties.

Kano State Deputy Governor Umar Abullahi Ganduje had on Wednesday, in the capital, summoned a meeting with Christian and Moslem leaders.

Agency reports said the meeting was held separately with the religious groups, with Special Adviser to the Governor on Religious Affairs, Dr. Muhammed Adamu, explaining that leaders of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) did not arrive on time.

"When they came, we were already meeting with the Ulamas, so they waited and when we finished with them, we entered into another meeting with CAN," he said.

Although details of the meeting were not made known, one Moslem leader at attended the meeting told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) that they were expected to preach the values of peaceful co-existence to their followers.

Adamu later said of the meeting held behind closed doors at the Government House and presided over by Deputy Governor Ganduje. "We told them to go back to their communities and maintain peace and stability, and all of us saw the need for that."

Normalcy returned in the afternoon with city residents going about their businesses.

=====
=====XXX

From: Nubi Achebo <kitua@wwa.com>

Friday, February 25, 2000

Scare of violence grips Kano

>From Rhikardo Chidi Obih,

Kano

ROUTINE chores were momentarily disrupted yesterday in Kano amidst a pandemonium occasioned by fears of a spillover of the Sharia related violence in Kaduna.

Business and other activities were briefly paralysed at about 10 a.m. in Kano as alarmed residents closed shops and retreated to safety zones following a rumour of imminent violence inspired by the situation in

Kaduna.

The rumour, which thickened on Wednesday, discouraged non-indigenes from passing the night at such areas as Brigade, Kurna-Asabe, Hamadiyya, Badarawa, PRP, Kwana-Jaba, Dakaka and Kwaji. Many temporarily moved house to the Sabon-Gari quarters - an area populated almost exclusively by non-natives.

Traders hurriedly locked up their stalls while schools closed in the thick of speculations of imminent eruption of violence yesterday morning. Parents raced to schools to retrieve their wards, even as motorists confined their movement to specific areas. Civil servants too had much difficulty getting to their offices.

Reacting swiftly to the disruption of activities, the Kano State government warned that it would deal ruthlessly with any person or group caught threatening the peace.

In a statement by the Director of Press, Mallam Sani Mohid Usman, the government noted with concern and dismay the activities of some disgruntled elements aimed at disrupting the peace of the state by fostering unnecessary confusion. Adequate steps, it added, were being taken to deal with the elements.

The statement reassured the public that there was no cause for alarm, advising the residents to go about their normal duties.

Kano State Deputy Governor Umar Abullahi Ganduje had on Wednesday, in the capital, summoned a meeting with Christian and Moslem leaders.

Agency reports said the meeting was held separately with the religious groups, with Special Adviser to the Governor on Religious Affairs, Dr. Muhammed Adamu, explaining that leaders of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) did not arrive on time.

"When they came, we were already meeting with the Ulamas, so they waited and when we finished with them, we entered into another meeting with CAN," he said.

Although details of the meeting were not made known, one Moslem leader at attended the meeting told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) that they were expected to preach the values of peaceful co-existence to their followers.

Adamu later said of the meeting held behind closed doors at the Government House and presided over by Deputy Governor Ganduje. "We told

them to go back to their communities and maintain peace and stability, and all of us saw the need for that."

Normalcy returned in the afternoon with city residents going about their businesses.

Kaduna eases curfew, probes crisis

>From Saxone Akhaine,

Kaduna

RESTATING its commitment to securing the peace, the Kaduna State Government yesterday relaxed the 24-hour curfew imposed on Tuesday to contain the violence over Sharia which left hundreds dead and much property destroyed.

It also raised a judicial commission of inquiry to unravel the crisis so as to bring perpetrators to book.

The government announced that the curfew would now last daily from 4 p.m. to 7. a.m, until further notice.

Secretary to the State Government (SSG) Charles Bonat, in a statement yesterday, praised President Olusegun Obasanjo for the prompt action taken to restore normalcy in the state, after three days of crisis.

He said: "We commend the Federal Government and the President for his personal concern and support over the unfortunate religious clashes... the support and cooperation of all eminent citizens, traditional rulers and entire people of the state in curtailing further violent clashes is similarly acknowledged."

Mr. Bonat explained that "in order to build on positive results so far achieved towards securing the peace, the government had critically assessed the prevailing circumstances and it was convinced there was need to relax some of the security measures imposed on the metropolis and environs so as to alleviate the suffering imposed on citizens.

"Most importantly, government is satisfied that relative peace has returned to the city. In view of these developments, government has relaxed the curfew imposed on Kaduna metropolis and environs, which will be enforced from 4 p.m. to 7 a.m. daily until further notice."

The official added that "for the avoidance of doubt, people would not

be allowed to move about or engage in business within the period covered by the curfew." He also said: "All citizens are cautioned not to engage in any unlawful assembly or unruly behaviour, as this would be construed to be act of sabotage which will be dealt with decisively.

"In order to allay anxiety that may be expressed by parents of school pupils, all classes within Kaduna metropolis and environs should remain closed until further notice. Offices could be opened within the period allowed for free movement, and agencies providing essential services should make adequate arrangements for security protection during curfew period."

Some residents ventured out to the streets in the morning obviously in search of food. Several business outfits, however remained shut - even within the period the curfew was suspended.

Acting Governor Stephen Shekari, inaugurating the five-man commission of inquiry led by Mr. Justice Ja'afaru Dalhatu, restated that the government "has not yet taken any position on the matter of Sharia. Instead, it is still expecting the views and inputs of the Forum of Moslems and Christians constituted to dialogue on the Sharia legal system."

He, however, remarked: "The tenets of democracy, and indeed the tenets of the two major religions in Nigeria - that is, Islam and Christianity - seek to promote peace and love for one another, tolerance and peaceful co-existence amongst all citizens..."

"Any acts capable of breaching these fundamental elements of democracy and the tenets of the two major religious can not be taken lightly. It is in pursuance of this that government cannot fold its arms over the recent religious crisis ... The (violence) has claimed many lives as well as caused wanton destruction of property..."

Deputy Governor Shekari, who is acting for Governor Ahmed Mohammed Makarfi, said the judicial panel was being raised to "investigate the unfortunate act, with a view to bringing to book for appropriate action those responsible for such act."

He added: "The commission is also appointed to advise on how to put such acts behind us once and for all, in order to enable us forge ahead with our development programmes."

The terms of reference given the judicial panel include to:

inquire into, investigate, ascertain and identify the immediate and remote causes of the violence;

identify individuals, organisations and other associations that might have contributed to the build-up to the riot by way of broadcast in the print and electronic media, organising seminars, workshops, conferences and so on;

assess and determine the extent of loss of lives and property, and other forms of damage caused during the riots and disturbances, as well as identify the perpetrators of the dastardly acts;

In the light of the findings, recommend appropriate legal actions to be taken against those responsible for the riots and /or disturbances; and

recommend appropriate steps to be taken by government to forestall future occurrence of riots and or disturbances.

Members of the panel, besides the chairman, Mr. Justice Dalhatu, include Alhaji Akilu Idris (representing the Jema'atu Nasril Islam-JNI, Mr. P.Y. Lolo (representing the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Mr. Victor Gwani, Alhaji Tukur Uthman, Mr. Dominic Yahaya (secretary), and Mr. Gamaniel Kore (counsel).

Officials of the Kaduna State Ministry of Health were yesterday seen with two lorry loads of Kaduna Central Prison inmates and issuing gloves for collecting bodies still lying around in the metropolis.

The decomposing bodies littered major roads, posing health hazards to residents of such areas as Tudun Wada, Rigasa, Kabala West and Narayi which were the worst hit zones of the crisis.

Even as calm reigned in the Kaduna metropolis, there was yesterday a heavy deployment of armed soldiers at the Government House.

For instance, an armoured tank was brought yesterday and mounted at the entrance to the seat of power.

Commenting on the crisis, wife of the governor, Hajia Asma'u Makarfi, urged residents to eschew religious bigotry and live in peace with one another.

She advised the people to exercise restraint, and always apply rational thinking in matters of religion instead of submitting to spontaneous emotion.

Hajia Makarfi also advised that people should adhere strictly to the

curfew imposed in Kaduna, Zaria and Kafanchan in order to forestall further violence.

Obasanjo reaffirms supremacy of constitution over Sharia

By Tola Kosoko and Taofeeq Ayinde

THE President spoke yesterday on the Sharia controversy in the light of the Kaduna clashes between Moslems and Christians in which about 200 are feared dead.

Ordinarily, Olusegun Obasanjo said, Sharia as a system of religious injunction has been in practice in northern Nigeria among its moslem population.

However, he reiterated that the Islamic legal system was subordinate to the constitution if it contradicated the federal document in theory and application, especially in criminal cases where stiff penalties are meted out Obasanjo spoke in a chat with media executives in Abuja last night.

He said he had sought clarification on the Islamic legal code which, according to him, has some 55 similarities to the penal code.

====XXX

From: Mark Volkers

Sent: Thursday, February 24, 2000 4:15 PM

To: WM; Peter VanderMeulen; Jena Rich

Subject: Religious Leaders Meet in Nigeria

Religious Leaders Meet in Nigeria

By TIM SULLIVAN Associated Press Writer

KADUNA, Nigeria (AP) -- Christian and Muslim leaders promised Thursday to work together to restore peace in the troubled city of Kaduna, as residents trickled back into the debris-strewn streets after two days of religious clashes left at least 200 people dead.

Schools and most stores remained closed, but hawkers were back in the streets where police and soldiers maintained a heavy presence.

Fighting erupted Monday morning during a demonstration by local Christians against a proposal to bring Islamic law, or sharia, to Kaduna state. By Wednesday, an uneasy calm had been restored to Kaduna, one of the largest cities in northern Nigeria.

Guns, cutlasses and other weapons were used, said workers at the morgue at

the city's main hospital. An overwhelming stench filled the building at the Ahmadu Bello Teaching Hospital where about 200 mostly charred bodies were piled up on slabs, on the floor, even the ground outside. More corpses were being brought in Thursday.

As life started to return to normal in the streets, state authorities eased the 20-hour curfew to between 4 p.m. and 7 a.m. and set up a panel to investigate.

Talks between religious leaders started Wednesday and continued into Thursday to work out ways to contain the violence.

"There is already a commitment on the part of leaders of Christians and Muslims to work together to promote peace and religious tolerance in our community," said Saidu Dogo, secretary of the local Christian Association of Nigeria branch. "We are still talking, and that is very important."

Not all the violence was motivated by religion, said a prominent local Muslim religious leader.

"We have a lot of unemployed youth all over the place and they are ready to cash in on situations like this and make trouble," Sheik Lawal Abubakar said. Police, who initially reported that just 13 bodies had been recovered, said Thursday they were still trying to determine the total number killed. Police gave no injury toll, but hospital staff said they treated 400 people.

Sporadic violence continued in outlying areas and in the neighboring towns of Kafanchan and Zaria. A deacon at the Nasana Baptist Church was among several people killed Wednesday in Zaria, the Lagos newspaper Punch reported Thursday. At night, sporadic gunfire echoed through the slums on Kaduna's outskirts, residents said.

"I believe staying here another night would be too dangerous," said Sunday Isibor, who was among several hundred at the main checkpoint on the road leading to the capital, Abuja, hoping to find transportation out of town Thursday. "I am very terrified."

Sharia has become an increasing flashpoint for tension in Nigeria, a nation of 120 million sharply divided along ethnic, religious and geographic lines. The divisions regularly flare into bloody battles.

Last month, sharia officially went into affect in neighboring Zamfara state, which is overwhelmingly Muslim. Niger state, south of Kaduna, and Sokoto state, to the northwest, passed their own sharia bills this week.

A number of other states in Nigeria's largely Muslim north-including Kaduna, which is about 40 percent Christian-are talking about following suit.

Sharia supporters across the North have assured non-Muslims they will not be tried under Islamic law.

Such assurances have meant little to Christians, who fear becoming marginalized or discriminated against. Their fears are fed by the country's newspapers in the largely Christian south, which have filled pages with dire warnings of the punishments Christians will face.

Muslim law prohibits such things as drinking alcohol and also calls for separate schools and public transportation for men and women. Islamic courts have been established to hold trials and mete out punishment to Muslims.

Recently, one man was lashed 80 times in Zamfara state for drinking alcohol. Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, elected a year ago after 15 years of military rule, has remained largely silent about sharia, but condemned the violence as "not only criminal but highly unpatriotic."

"What we need most now is love, caring for each other and joining of hands to rebuild the nation together," Obasanjo said on national television Wednesday.

"Let us bind our wounds and accept the challenge of the time."

_AP-NY-02-24-00 1530EST

Mark Volkers
Communications Director
Christian Reformed World Missions

=====
=====xxx

Nubi Achebo NaijaNews Guardian News Feb 21 2000

Niger to implement Sharia on May 4

>From Akin Alofetekun, Minna

GOVERNOR Abdulkadir Kure of Niger State has given May 4 for the commencement of the full implementation of Sharia legal system in the state.

Addressing a large crowd of Moslem faithful from most states of the North at the Central Mosque, Minna yesterday, Kure urged them to be steadfast, describing the introduction of Sharia as a challenge to the entire Moslem community in Nigeria.

The governor enjoined the faithful who were mostly of the Izalatil Bid'a Wa Iqam atis Sunnah and popularly known as Izala sect, to avoid cheating and other acts contrary to the teachings of Islam.

The special guest at the occasion and Zamfara State Governor, Alhaji Ahmed Sani, posited that the greatest opposition and antagonists to Sharia were not the Christians, but some groups and individuals trying to protect selfish interest.

Governor Sani attributed the delay in the implementation of Sharia in some states to the fear of its repercussion on some government officials who are still deeply involved in acts which Sharia is out to eradicate."

He pledged to commit all he had in life to the cause of Islam, assuring that his administration would ensure the full implementation of the

She said to effect a smooth take-off of the Islamic law, government should fulfil three conditions. These include the launching of a resettlement scheme whereby they could be fully engaged in economic activities to earn a living, a marriage grant of about N10,000-N20,000 each and award of government contracts to its members.

She said that when these conditions are provided by government, they will not be forced to migrate to neighbouring states of Bauchi, Borno, Adamawa and Gombe.

Bintu, however, assured the governor that the entire womenfolk in the state are in support of the adoption and implementation of the Sharia legal system provided that the conditions were met by government.

Responding, Governor Ibrahim assured the free women of government's support. He explained that this year's budget has made adequate provisions for the resettlement of unemployed women, youths and the disabled in the 17 local councils.

Ibrahim, who was surrounded by the free women, lamented their plight. He feared that unless the women are resettled, the adoption and the implementation of the Sharia legal system may not hitch free.

Besides, he further reassured that the adoption of Sharia will not infringe on the rights of non-Moslems, stressing that government has already completed arrangements for the protection of their rights.

The governor specifically urged the free women to form cooperative societies, adding that this could be used in channelling all government support and assistance to them.

Investigations by The Guardian also revealed that about 30 per cent of the commercial sex workers operating in about six hotels in Damaturu have migrated to Plateau, Borno, Gombe and Bauchi states.

Of this number, about 25 have resorted to the buying and selling of household products, vegetables and food items at the Damaturu central market.

The Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Lagos State branch at the weekend said the adoption of Sharia law by Zamfara and other states was a violation of Section 10 of the 1999 Constitution and "poses serious dangers to several other constitutional rights e.g. the right to freedom of thought conscience and religion enshrined in 3.38 of the 1999 Constitution."

A statement by the Chairman, Adesuyi Olateru-Olagbegi and Publicity Secretary, Owootomo Oluwo said the Sharia law was bound to lead to the collapse of several otherwise perfectly legitimate business concerns." It appealed to the Federal Government to take steps to arrest the situation.

=====
=====xxx

From: Nubi Achebo <kitua@wwa.com>

: At least 25 killed in Christian-Moslem clashes in Nigeria

09:01 ET

Deutsche Presse-Agentur

Copyright (c) 2000, dpa

Nairobi (dpa) - Clashes between Christians and Moslems in Kaduna, northern Nigeria, over the introduction of Islamic law have killed at least 25 people, news reports from the city Tuesday said.

Radio reports said that despite a dusk-to-dawn curfew police Tuesday were unable to contain the violence which began on Monday when thousands of Christians demonstrated against plans to introduce Sharia, the Islamic legal system, in the predominantly Moslem state of Kaduna, of which the city is the capital.

Eyewitnesses said police fired on demonstrators indiscriminately. Corpses could be seen lying in the streets and some buildings were on fire. Cars with pro-Islamic stickers were attacked by Christians.

The state government appealed for calm and for leaders of the two communities to persuade their followers to go home. Despite the curfew, militants put up barricades during the night.

Several northern states are contemplating introducing Sharia. In one state, Zamfara, Islamic judges have been holding court since last month: one man was recently sentenced to 100 lashes for extramarital sex, an alcoholic received 80 lashes and a taxidriver was jailed for driving a woman in his cab.

Bloodshed in Nigeria as Islamic law debate escalates

08:53 ET
Deutsche Presse-Agentur
Copyright (c) 2000, dpa

By Hendrik Groth, dpa

Nairobi (dpa) - The debate over the introduction of Islamic law in the north of Nigeria has brought death and destruction to the city of Kaduna, where religious violence has left at least 25 people dead.

Thousands of angry Christians rioted in the streets of the Kaduna, which is home to 800,000 people, on Monday night and despite a dusk-to-dawn curfew police reinforcements drafted into the area have been unable to restore law and order completely.

Eyewitnesses said the streets of Sabo, a workers' district of Kaduna, were littered with bodies, with many buildings reported to be ablaze.

Sharia law went into effect in Zamfara state in the middle of January. Under the law, courts can order the stoning and severing of limbs for certain crimes.

One man received 100 lashes of the whip for indulging in extra-marital sex, an alcoholic was punished with 80 lashes and a taxi driver was jailed for carrying a woman passenger.

The states of Kano and Niger also plan to introduce the Islamic law while three other provinces have shown an interest.

The respected magazine West Africa believes there is a danger that the multiracial state could break up because of continuing violence between different tribal groups and increasing religious intolerance.

Following the end of the military dictatorship in May 1999, President Olusegun Obasanjo declared that he could not repair in 30 days what had gone wrong in 30 years. Now Obasanjo seems to be running out of time.

Obasanjo, a Christian, did not want to comment publicly on the introduction of sharia in Zamfara so as not to provoke further unrest. However he has made it understood that the introduction of Islamic law clashes with the constitution of the laicist state.

Nonetheless the Moslems in Zamfara celebrated the decision by Governor Ahmed Sani, who for months has been scoring points with the state's impoverished population by making ultrareligious demands. Representatives of the Christian minority are meanwhile horrified.

Nigeria is marked by rivalry between the people of the north and south. In the barren north the Moslem Hausa people are in the majority; in the oil-rich south it is the Christian Yoruba. In Kano state or in the Niger delta region members of these ethnic groups have repeatedly fought each other with many casualties.

Civil rights activist Oroh warns that if sharia is also introduced in Kano "it could be very critical". The economic results could also be considerable, he says.

"Christians who run the shops, hotels and restaurants would have to leave Kano," he said.

Zamfara governor Sani sees things much differently. He stresses that Islamic law applies only to Moslems. Sharia law will make it possible to combat crime, corruption and prostitution more effectively, he said.

The governor does not, however, say how police and judges would react should Moslems and Christians be involved together in a criminal offence.

For the women of Zamfara, Islamic law is felt immediately in everyday life. For example, female bus passengers are obliged to sit at the rear of the vehicle, with the front seats reserved for male passengers.

Yet the state is not merely threatening punishment in order to achieve "moral change".

Sani's wife, Karima, has offered a 250-dollar reward for prostitutes who immediately give up their profession. That is more than a domestic servant can earn in several months in Nigeria. Twenty-seven women have already taken up the offer, she says.

Nigerian troops ordered to help end religious riot.

06:29 ET

Reuters English News Service

(C) Reuters Limited 2000.

KADUNA, Nigeria, Feb 22 (Reuters) - Nigerian troops were called in on Tuesday to help end fighting in the northern city of Kaduna between Christians and Moslems demanding Islamic law, police said.

"Soldiers from the army's One Mechanised Division in Kaduna have been drafted to join in controlling the clashes," a senior police officer told Reuters.

Dozens of people have died in the violence, which erupted on Monday after thousands of Christians marched to protest against calls for the introduction of sharia law in the multi-religious state.

Police said police reinforcements had been sent from states in northern and central Nigeria and had been flown in from the southwestern commercial capital, Lagos.

Strict sharia has already been implemented in northern Zamfara State, to local jubilation but unease in other parts of the West African country of at least 108 million, which is Africa's most populous nation.

Ethnic and religious tension has been on the rise since President Olusegun Obasanjo took office last May to end 15 years of military dictatorship.

-----=====xxx

Anti-Sharia rally in northern Nigerian city ATTENTION - ADDS background to protest ///

02/21/2000

Agence France-Presse
(Copyright 2000)

KADUNA, Nigeria, Feb 21 (AFP) - Several thousand Christians demonstrated in the northern Nigerian city of Kaduna on Monday against calls from the Muslim community for the introduction of Islamic Sharia law, witnesses said.

The demonstrators marched through the centre of the city, the former capital of the northern region, to the State House of Assembly and Government House, shouting demands that Kaduna remain secular, the witnesses told AFP.

The demonstration was peaceful, witnesses said.

In the past three weeks, Muslims from Kaduna State have staged small daily demonstrations in the city demanding the introduction of the Islamic code, and last Monday several thousand Muslims rallied in the town.

At the weekend, several thousand Muslim women from across the state

staged another rally demanding Sharia law be imposed.

Last year, the Kaduna State House of Assembly set up a committee to look into imposing Sharia law but the body was boycotted by Christian leaders.

Christian representatives have, however, joined a committee raised by Governor Ahmed Makarfi on Sharia.

The population of Kaduna, which numbers over one million, is thought to be split roughly evenly between Muslims and Christians, with Muslims in a slight majority.

In the north of Nigeria in general, Christians make up around 10 percent of the population, with Muslims the great majority.

At the weekend, the Lagos branch of the Nigerian Bar Association said it believed the imposition of Sharia is unconstitutional.

Sharia law was declared in one state, Zamfara, late last year and took effect last month. Since then several other states in the north, including Niger, Kaduna, Kano, Sokoto and Yobe have begun considering imposing Sharia.

Niger State Governor Abdulkadir Kure, who has put a bill on Sharia to the local state assembly, has pledged to introduce the code on May 4, providing it is passed.

In Yobe, the governor has said he will introduce Sharia in April.

The governor of Kano State, home to Nigeria's second largest city of Kano, has yet to pronounce publicly on Sharia and has been accused by Muslims of unwillingness to impose the law, after a motion was passed in the Kano State assembly urging its adoption.

Kano, with more than five million residents, has a large population of non-Muslims and Christian leaders have said they would make it impossible to impose Sharia on the city.

NIGERIA: Several dead in Nigerian Moslem Christian riot.

07:20 ET

Reuters English News Service

(C) Reuters Limited 2000.

KADUNA, Nigeria, Feb 21 (Reuters) - Several people were killed in rioting between Moslems and Christians in the northern Nigerian city of Kaduna, police said on Monday.

"It is extremely serious. Everybody is out, the mobile police, everybody. There are skirmishes all over the place and bodies on the streets. We don't know how many are dead," a senior officer told Reuters.

Violence erupted after a march by thousands of Christians protesting against demands from Moslems for the introduction of strict Islamic Sharia law in Kaduna following its implementation by one northern state and its planned adoption by several others.

The Sharia issue has polarised religious opinions in the West African country of at least 108 million, which is divided roughly in half between Moslems and Christians and animists.

Both ethnic and religious tension have been on the rise against a backdrop of increased insecurity since southern Christian President Olusegun Obasanjo took office last May to end 15 years of dictatorship by soldiers from the largely Moslem north.

Witnesses said shops, mosques and churches had been attacked by rival groups in Kaduna, which has large numbers of both Moslems and Christians.

Three killed in clash over Sharia in Nigerian city ADDS stalls burnt, vehicles destroyed, businesses shut ///

02/21/2000

Agence France-Presse

(Copyright 2000)

KADUNA, Nigeria, Feb 21 (AFP) - Three people were killed in the northern Nigerian city of Kaduna on Monday during a protest by Christians against plans for the introduction of Sharia law, a correspondent said.

The three, believed to be Muslims, were set upon after barracking a group of Christians demonstrating against plans for the imposition of the Islamic code here, said the correspondent, who witnessed the incident.

Tens of thousands of Christians had gathered in central Kaduna from around 7:00 a.m. on Monday after calls were made in churches in the city on Sunday for a mass demonstration against Sharia.

The main thoroughfares of the city were blocked by the crowds and police were out in force, the correspondent said.

In the city's main market, several stalls believed to belong to Muslim Hausa-speakers were set on fire and in surrounding streets vehicles were destroyed.

Across the city, hundreds of shops and businesses shut their doors fearing trouble and business life ground to a standstill, the AFP correspondent said.

Demonstrators had earlier begun their march through Kaduna to the State House of Assembly and Government House, shouting demands that Kaduna remain secular

In the past three weeks, Muslims from Kaduna State have staged small daily demonstrations in the city demanding the introduction of the Islamic code, and last Monday several thousand Muslims rallied in the town.

At the weekend, several thousand Muslim women from across the state staged another rally demanding Sharia law be imposed.

Last year, the Kaduna State House of Assembly set up a committee to look into imposing Sharia law but the body was boycotted by Christian leaders.

Christian representatives have however joined a committee raised by Governor Ahmed Makarfi on Sharia.

The population of Kaduna, which numbers over one million, is thought to be split roughly evenly between Muslims and Christians, with Muslims in a slight majority.

Sharia law was declared in one state, Zamfara, late last year and took effect last month. Since then several other states in the north, including Niger, Kaduna, Kano, Sokoto and Yobe have begun considering imposing Sharia.

====xxx

January 31/2000 Nubi Achebo NaijaNews

Kebbi governor faults constitution review panel

>From Saxone Akhaine, Kaduna

KEBBI State Governor, Muhammad Aliero yesterday faulted the legitimacy of the presidential committee on the review of the 1999 Constitution.

He said the committee raised by President Olusegun Obasanjo was selective, unrepresentative and lacked the people's mandate.

Aliero, who spoke in Kaduna, criticised the Federal Government for raising an ad-hoc committee to review a document (the constitution) whose strength and weaknesses Nigerians were yet to appreciate.

He said: "I am one of those who really believe that constitutional review should stay for now until we operate the constitution for at least a minimum of one year."

He remarked that even if the constitution needed to be reviewed, the task ought to have been left to the National Assembly.

On the controversial issue of the adoption of Sharia in the northern states, the governor noted that the Islamic legal system had been in operation in the region since 1804 after the jihad of Uthman Dan Fodio.

Aliero argued that what was happening now was only a sort of reawakening aimed at trying to expand the scope of application of Sharia beyond the state level so that the legal system can be enforced by the Federal courts.

According to him, states already have the constitutional powers to establish their own Sharia courts, adding that "what we as Moslems should do is to fight for the removal of these constitutional limitations."

"Let us make Sharia applicable right from the lowest court to the highest court in the country... if you limit the application of Sharia at the state levels, it will be in conformity with the 1999 Constitution."

====XXX-----

NUBI ACHEBO NAIJANEWS
Nigerian state enacts Islamic law

01/27/2000

Associated Press Newswires

Copyright 2000. The Associated Press. All Rights Reserved.

ABUJA, Nigeria (AP) - Thousands of Muslim faithful staged joyous street marches Thursday in the capital of Nigeria's northern Zamfara state to celebrate the enactment of Islamic law.

State governor Ahmed Sani signed two bills Thursday making Zamfara the first Nigerian state to adopt Islamic law, known as Sharia.

The bills established Sharia courts and a Sharia penal code, crucial for the law's functioning. Later Thursday, Islamic judges were expected to be sworn in as heads of the 24 newly established Sharia courts.

"Everything has gone very well and there is a sense of fulfillment among the Muslim population here. While some are wondering what the implications are, the overwhelming majority believe it was very justified," local journalist Sani Abdullahi said in a phone call from Gusau, the state capital located about 250 miles north of Abuja.

Sharia is based on the Koran and the body of Islamic traditions. While it officially went into effect Thursday, some aspects of Sharia were adopted months ago.

Women-only taxis have been operating in Zamfara since last year and most schools now separate boys and girls. Nearly all bars have been closed and almost every store has been forced to stop selling alcohol.

Zamfara state authorities have repeatedly assured the minority Christian community that Sharia will only apply to Muslims. But they also have said schools and public transportation eventually will be completely segregated by gender.

Nigeria, a country of 120 million people, is sharply divided along ethnic and religious lines. Muslims and Christians each make up about 45 percent of Nigeria's population.

In Zamfara, though, Christians make up less than 10 percent of the population and are mostly transplanted southerners of the Yoruba or Ibo ethnic groups. Christians in the south have generally opposed Sharia.

=====
xxx

NUbi ACHEBO Jan 27 2000

Sharia comes into force in northern Nigeria ATTENTION - ADDS quotes, details, background ///

01/27/2000

Agence France-Presse
(Copyright 2000)

GUSAU, Nigeria, Jan 27 (AFP) - The northern Nigerian state of Zamfara on Thursday became the first to officially establish full Islamic Sharia law, at a ceremony here, officials said.

Governor Ahmed Sani, a 39-year-old former senior central bank official, signed state-wide legislation establishing 24 Sharia courts and swore in the new Kadis or Islamic judges, the governor's director of press affairs, Bashir Sanda-Gusau told AFP.

"It is a wonderful day for Zamfara, for Muslims, for Nigeria. We have Sharia again," he said minutes after the signing ceremony.

The strict Islamic code has existed in mainly Muslim northern Nigeria for centuries.

But when British colonial forces overran the region at the end of the 19th century, the powers of Sharia courts were restricted to religious matters and all other matters were dealt with by the ordinary criminal courts.

Nigeria's current constitution allows for the establishment of Islamic courts, but Christians, who form a sizeable 10 percent of the population in Zamfara, say it does not allow for the courts to deal with criminal matters.

"The courts established today will have criminal powers. They will be able to order amputation of a hand for thieves, stoning to death for adulterers, execution for murderers," Sanda-Gusau said.

Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, a born-again Christian, has been reluctant to come out in public criticising the expansion of Sharia in the north, where four other states have taken steps to introduce the code.

Last year he said he believed it would "wither" and Sharia would not in fact be implemented.

Federally-appointed police officials in Zamfara told last year they had no orders to implement the law.

Sanda-Gusau said however that observance of the code would be assured by a "voluntary security force" of 2,000-3,000 members of an Islamic movement established in the past month by the governor.

The force would not have powers to arrest or detain suspected violators of the Sharia code, but would inform the police and ensure that they were arrested, the official told AFP.

=====xxx

January 24, 2000 Nubi Achebo
NaijaNews Guardian

Sharia: Niger deputy governor urges prayer by Christians

>From Martins Oloja, Abuja Bureau Chief

NIGER State Deputy Governor Shem Zagbayi Nuhu has advised Christians to fast and pray over the planned introduction of the Sharia legal system in the state.

Nuhu, who is also a Christian, urged the press to exercise caution in reporting the issue.

Disclosing that the prospect of Sharia legal system in the state had not strained his relationship with Governor Abdulkadir Kure, he said that he was not agitated because he now believes that the Islamic law will not affect Christians.

"When I first heard about the introduction of Sharia ... particularly in Niger State, as every other Christian, I was concerned because I was ignorant of what it will mean to my faith and my freedom to practise (as a Christian). But on one to one discussion with the state governor and the meeting held with the executive council on the issue, I was convinced based on the information available to me.

"The executive governor and other members of the executive council of Niger State said that there is no way the planned introduction of Sharia will affect Christians' freedom to worship their God the way they want to do, "he told The Guardian at the Government House, Minna at the weekend.

Nuhu pointed out that the plan to introduce Sharia in the state is not the governor's show as the bill to be presented to the state House of Assembly, will be examined.

"I have been assured I will see the bill. I want to assure you also and anyone that may have some reservations that I will go through the bill and every document that is necessary to ensure that the provisions that will guarantee the rights of every person are met," he said.

The deputy governor, who doubles as the health commissioner, advised

Christians to continue to fast and pray.

He said: "Prayer is very good because you wait on the Lord. And God in his own special way will intervene in any situation to make life better for all. I want to say at this level we need to exercise patience and we need to get reliable information on what is going on. Let's not act on rumour because that may put us in a position that may not take us to where we want to be. Let's get reliable information as much as possible before any line of action is embarked upon."

Nuhu added that the controversy generated by the plan would not have degenerated if Christians had obtained reliable information on it (plan).

"I want to believe that if only the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) had obtained reliable information, they might not have gone as far as they did," he said.

He urged the press to exercise caution as a section is mixing the declaration of Sharia law with declaration of Sharia state.

"I would like to appeal to Christians and the press to try and read the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to understand what the government is trying to introduce in Niger State ... It is not as if it is a new thing at all. It is a provision that we have lived with without anyone noticing that it is there... because it has not concerned you directly since you are not an adherent of Islamic faith ...," Nuhu added.

Stressing that "non-Moslems will have nothing to do with the (Sharia) law," the deputy governor said that the government does not intend to declare Islamic state in Niger "because that will run contrary to the constitution."

 =====xxx

Niger denies Christians use of state hall

>From Akin Alofetekun, Minna

CHRISTIANS resident in Niger State may have been barred from making use of the government-owned UK Bello Arts Theatre, an apparent reprisal action over their opposition to the introduction of the Sharia legal system.

The state branch of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), which had earlier booked the venue for a seminar on implications of the Islamic law being enforced in the state, was told that it could no longer hold.

Similarly, an open crusade slated for the same venue by a popular lady televangelist Linda Eloko Edukogha was cancelled and money returned to the organisers.

The crusade was to hold for three days in which the management of the theatre would have realised N50,000.

CAN, in a television announcement said the seminar had consequently been shifted to the St. Peters Church along Keteren-Gwari road, urging Christians to be steadfast in your opposition to this assault.

CAN State Chairman Bishop Jonah Kolo denounced this high level of intolerance, adding: You can now see what we are saying. If they are this intolerant at this embryonic stage of Sharia, you can imagine what would happen when Sharia fully comes on board.

He reminded Governor Abdulkhadir Kure of his constitutional responsibilities to both Christians and Moslems in the state, warning: Our patience should not be stretched to the limit.

He added: I believe he has not forgotten that the UK Bello (Theatre) belongs to us all and not to a particular religion.

CAN had ordered Christians to close shops and fast for three days in protest against the Sharia, beginning from Monday. The protest was to be rounded off with the seminar today.

Kure, after going round the town on the second day of the closure, had taunted the Christians, saying they could continue with the protest until the bill was defeated in the house, adding: That is when they can open and jubilate.

The executive is, however, yet to present the Sharia bill to the state assembly which had resumed on Tuesday.

The bill is not yet here. It is not on our order paper, the Deputy Director (Information and Publicity), Mallam Musa Hamisu stated.

=====xxx

said to have come to the Assembly floor threatening every lawmaker in opposition to the governor to beware. Many took to their heels as his threats announced his presence.

The impeachment of the former speaker of the Oyo State House of Assembly, Honourable Kehinde Ayoola also resurrected the dirt in Ibadan politics of

the Penkelemes years. Charms, acid and pellets were used by the legislators. Police had to fire several gun shots to disperse the brawling lawbreakers and hired thugs. In the aftermath of the squabble in which heads were smashed and bones broken, the death of Mr. Ademola Adekunle, the sound director in the House of Assembly was recorded. Some of the pellets fired on the eventful day were said to have hit him fatally. Two female legislators, Hon. (Mrs.) Latan Odumbaku (Ibadan South-West II) and Hon. (Mrs.) Ramota Okemakinde (Ibarapa East) claimed they were dangerously hit with charms in the ensuing fight.

Awaiting detonation is the religious bomb which embers some Islamic fanatics are already fanning. Already, Sharia posters don the city. Some voices say the hand behind the campaign is that of the Aare Musulumi of Yorubaland, Alhaji Azeez Alao Arisekola, an Abacha loyalist and henchman. A faceless Islamic organisation which calls itself Propagators of Islamic Light and Truth (PILT) signed the posters. The state government has ruled out the introduction of Sharia law in Oyo State saying it was only practicable and suitable in a homogenous Muslim society and "not in a multi-religious set up" like Oyo State. However, a far more disturbing situation happened Sunday, 2 January 2000. Members of the Ansar-Ud-Deen Central Mosque located at the end of Salvation Army road, near the Ogunpa channel clashed with Christian worshippers at The Gospel Faith Mission International. The Christians had protested the frequent blockade of the only connecting road to their church by the Ansar-Ud-Deen members who on Sundays organise a Bible/Qoran service in which comparisons are made in the open. The youths, who would always conduct their comparison service outside the mosque instead of inside the it threatened the church's resident Pastor, Thomas Ademola Olabode and church secretary, Gbade Adewale that they were ready to launch a Jihad on the church any time. Pastor Olabode speaks: "They said they have been watching us. They brought knives, cutlasses, petrol and matches to fight the church."

The stage for the clash was set in a 30 September 1999 letter written by the church and which invited the Mosque's council to a meeting to "discuss with you in respect of the programme you hold on Sundays that causes blockade of the main road and entrance to our church street which hinders us from bringing in our vehicles." Through a 4 October 1999 letter to the church, Barrister M.A. Oyafajo, secretary to the Ansar-Ud-Deen society, communicated the society's acceptance to dialogue but rejected the date fixed by the church. The meeting later held on a date fixed by the Mosque.

But the obstruction continued every Sunday. "Why must they disturb us even on Sundays during our church service period?" a frustrated Adewale said.

Already, the church had written to the police authorities, State Security Service (SSS) and the Ibadan North-West local government chairman, Hon.

He alleged that "those who are organising the economic embargo against the Moslems in Niger State are those who are keeping brothels at the drinking parlours."

On the fear that government may manipulate the bill at the House of Assembly, the spokesman said: "The legislature contains the representatives of the people. If they happen to be minority, it is unfortunate. But we (the government) take interest of the majority and also protect the interest of the majority rights. That is why Sharia is not for Christians, but for Moslems who choose to be ruled by Sharia."

He added that "even among Moslems, it Sharia is not compulsory."

He said that Christians can express their unhappiness "better by coming out openly to hold press conferences".

Mohammed stated that if Christians "deliberately try to create economic embargo, the government of Niger State will eventually find ways and means to assist others to have competitions."

Reacting to government's belief that the Sharia would check immorality and crime, Chairman of the Christian Association of Nigeria in the state, Reverend Joseph Gomo said the Sharia will not bring solution to vices in the state.

"It is not Sharia that will bring the solution. The only thing the government can do is to call the clergymen and the indigenes to discuss and rub their minds," Gomo told the BBC.

He refuted the assertion by the government that it was the non-indigenes that shut their shops to blackmail the state.

"That is a lie. All the indigenes of Niger State have supermarkets and shop. It is CAN that closed the shops. It is not the indigenes or any individual. It was a resolution that CAN took and declared to all Christians in the state. And the non-indigenes are also Christians. So, what do you want them to do?" he asked.

Asked whether the governor supported CAN's directive, the cleric said: "Let me put it this way, the governor is a spare tyre. This means that the original tyre will puncture before the original tyre can take off. We understand that, but they are trying to make him resign. That may be by frustration, he will resign. But we (CAN) don't want him that way."

=====
xxx

NaijaNews Jan 17 2000

From: Nubi Achebo <kitua@yahoo.com>

NIGER State Constitution supreme to Sharia Law

NIGER State which has just joined the league of states operating Sharia law has said its implementation would not clash with the constitution. According to Governor Abdulkadir Kure, Sharia law would submit to the supremacy of the nation's constitution.

Fielding questions from journalists on the controversial law in Minna, the governor assured that where the system ran contrary to the provision of the constitution, Sharia would bow to give the constitution the right of way.

"For example, the aspect of the Sharia that deals with death sentence will not be implemented because of the constitutional provision of the right to life in one of its sections," Kure pointed out.

He said having vowed to preserve and protect the nation's constitution during his swearing in, his administration would do nothing to flout the provisions under any guise.

Kure, allaying the fears of Christians and other non-Moslems, said the legal system would not affect them. "Do you know that even Moslems could opt not to be tried under the Sharia and his wish will be granted? On the other hand a non-Moslem may opt for Sharia if he discovered that he could go away with a lighter sentence than provided for under the common law?" he said.

The governor assured that there would be no misapplication and miscarriage of justice, because only competent and pious jurists would handle Sharia cases. He added that anyone who hides under Sharia to settle personal scores would be severely dealt with.

Kure denied any religious bias over non-inclusion of more than one Christian in his cabinet. He said: "You will have to direct that question to the politicians who made all the recommendations.

Left to me, I would have loved it to be 50-50, but I have to abide by their recommendations which you are now saying do not favour Christians."

====xxx

Nuhu Achebo NaijaNews Jan 10/2000

From National Concord

Female Workers Face Sack

Hundreds of women holding public offices risk their jobs with the implementation of Sharia in Zamfara and some northern states, this year.

Under the Islamic legal code, women are forbidden from either holding public offices or undertaking jobs that encourage intermingling with the opposite sex. -National concord.

=====
xxx

NaijaNews Guardian

From: Nubi Achebo <kitua@yahoo.com>

Monday, 10 January 2000

Why religious crises persist, by CAN

>From Abiodun Fagbemi, Ilorin

CHRISTIANS in Kwara State have traced the festering religious crises in the country to the subtle admission of Nigeria into the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) in 1986.

Urging the restructuring of the country the way all of us will be represented, the Christians, under the aegis of Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), also canvassed the re-constitution of the Kwara State Inter-religious Committee as a panacea to the sporadic religious mayhem in the state.

They said: Christianity and Islam were not like this until General Ibrahim Babangida took us to the OIC. Lets come to together again and plan this country the way all of us will be fully represented.

This is necessary because, the day will never come in Nigeria when everybody will be a Moslem. The day will never come as well when everybody will be Christians.

Speaking with The Guardian at the weekend in Ilorin, their Secretary, Dr. Olusola Ajolore claimed that the Kwara State Inter-religious Committee headed by a retired Supreme Court Justice, Seidu Kanu has remained a lame duck due to non-implementation by successive governments of its recommendations.

I cannot remember a single day that any government in Kwara State enforced the recommendation of the panel. The panel, no doubt is

occupied by tested Nigerians but no government in the state has ever seen it as a virile body.

To him, if its recommendations are not therefore implemented, then the committee is set up for window dressing, adding: That's why I refer to it as a lame duck, very close to useless, it should be revitalised for effective functioning.

He cited disobedience of the committees recommendation on the rebuilding of the Church of God Mission, Abbo Oba, Ilorin, allegedly pulled down by suspected Moslem fanatics last year.

Besides, CAN secretary recalled the panels advice that the Bill Board of Evangelical Church of West Africa (ECWA), allegedly vandalised two years ago by suspected Moslem youths be re-erected which was never heeded by the government.

His ideal religious panel, he said, is one which members should be drawn from the council areas of the state.

CAN, Agolore said, is not talking of Ilorin committee alone, but that which will embrace all Kwarans across local council boundaries.

He stated that Christians are not only ready to seat on the same press conference with Moslem leaders... but are looking forward to a day, well co-sponsor programmes as being done in civilised societies.

The leader who noted that the fear of God was lacking in many youths, canvassed a religious forum to redress the trend.

 =====xxxx

Nuhu Achebo NaijaNews Jan 6 2000

Obasanjo seeks adherence to separation of religion, state

>From Emeka Nwankpa (Abuja), Dickson Adeyanju (Lagos), Njadvara Musa (Damaturu), Abiodun Fagbemi (Ilorin) and Akin Alofebekun (Minna)

PRESIDENT Olusegun Obasanjo has advocated strict adherence to the principle of separation of state from religion as enshrined in the 1999 Constitution, saying it was necessary for mutual tolerance and respect for one another's faiths and beliefs.

In his message to the nation in the commemoration of Eid-el-Fitr, he said such a compliance was crucial in view of the multiplicity of

religions and sects in the country.

According to him, every well-meaning citizen of the country should strive to safeguard its secularity to guarantee the freedom of all to practise their chosen faiths and religions in peace.

He said: "In this regard, the importance of mutual tolerance and respect for other faiths and beliefs cannot be over-stressed. The path of separation of state and religion which was chosen for our country from the beginning is still enshrined in its supreme law, the 1999 Constitution. Given the multiplicity of religions and sects in the country, the wisdom of this choice cannot be doubted and we must do our best to safeguard it and guarantee the freedom of all our people to practise their chosen faiths and religions in peace."

The president also said that the new democratic dispensation had provided a political framework for the realisation of the nation's collective aspirations which he noted must be to strengthen and not weaken it.

"One way of doing this is to ensure that our collective attention is properly focused at all times on the urgent task of nation-building before us and that we are not distracted by needless and diversionary controversies," he remarked.

He congratulated moslems for successfully fulfilling one of the major obligations of Islam by enduring the self-denial of the month of Ramadan, pointing out that they should internalise the virtues of piety, discipline, truthfulness, honesty, charity, justice, equity and fairness to all.

"These are worthy values which we all will do well to imbibe as there can be no doubt that our dear nation, Nigeria, will be a much better place for us all to live in if, collectively and as individuals, we reflect these values in our daily lives as well as our social, economic and political relationships," he added.

He also noted that the mass internalisation of the ideals of charity, honesty, justice, equity and fairness to all by the nation's political leadership at every level and the general citizenry would stand the country in good stead as solutions are being sought to problems which had stalled the realisation of potentials.

The president also stressed that every Nigerian had a role to play in the efforts to build a strong, united, progressive and prosperous nation. He urged Nigerians to rededicate themselves to overcoming the

great challenges which are expected in the nation's bid to take its rightful place in the comity of nations in the new millennium.

Governor Bukar Abba Ibrahim of Yobe State urged moslems and their christian counterparts to always strive to improve the poor's living conditions imbibe the virtue of self-discipline.

He noted that these attributes were pre-requisites for the maintenance of law and order in the Nigerian society.

In Kaduna, Governor Ahmed Makarfi warned against the use of offensive language by any group in the state in pursuit of its goals.

He stated that dialogue was the only viable option in resolving issues, stressing the need for tolerance and peaceful co-existence, which, according to him, "is fundamental to the teachings of Islam."

Niger State Acting Governor, Dr. Shem Zagbaya Nuhu advised moslems to adhere to the five pillars of Islam in order to live according to the tenets of the religion.

He said that for any moslem to succeed in life, it was necessary to emulate and adhere to the teachings of Prophet Mohammed (S.A.W.).

Governor Bisi Akande of Osun State appealed for a peaceful and harmonious co-existence among the populace.

His Kwara State counterpart, Rear Admiral Mohammed Alabi Lawal (rtd), enjoined citizens to shun violence and religious bigotry.

As patriotic citizens of this great nation, you should shun rumour ñ mongering, religious bigotry and indeed all tendencies capable of tarnishing the good name of this country," he said.

"You also have an obligation to support the Federal Government in its efforts at executing all its programmes and policies designed to improve the quality of lives of the entire citizenry."

Alhaji Wahab Iyanda Folawiyo, the Baba Adini of Nigeria, said that the essence of the 30-day spiritual exercise did not lie in hunger and thirst but rather in spiritual uplift and an unshaken adherence to the tenets of the Islamic faith.

Folawiyo, deputy president, Nigeria Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), equally condemned the recent religious clashes in the country, saying these events diminish the claim to religious

down

the Silo Protestant Church, the largest of the Ambon Protestant Church.

Observers saw more than 1,000 persons in white clothes or headbands coming in

by boat. Christians believe that Muslims plan to burn down the whole Christian quarter before the end of Ramadan, January 9.

The unrest continued through the last week of December. On December 29, a

CNN reporter said the troops were taking sides, Christian soldiers against

Muslim soldiers. However, near the end of the week, fighting subsided. A Reuters News Agency report of January 3 said that the army had calmed the

situation, seizing more than 200 weapons.

This latest outbreak of violence is merely a continuation of the violence

which has plagued Ambon since the beginning of 1999. Police say about 1,500

have been killed in this period. Although this latest riot was said to be

caused by food shortages, many believe that the continuing violence is caused

by militants trying to Islamicize the province. (ENI)

CONFLICT OVER SHARIA BOILS UP IN NIGERIA

Nigeria - As another Nigerian state moved toward setting up Islamic law,

sharia, as its state law, Christians throughout the country marched through

the streets of several major cities to protest the increasing Islamization of

their country.

The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), organized the protests to

support Christians in six northern Nigerian states: Zamfara, Bauchi, Kano,

Katsina, Yobe, and Borno. These six states have recently declared themselves

Islamic states and are planning to or have recently implemented sharia.

Zamfara has already passed the sharia into law and it will take effect in

early January. Both Kano and Sokoto are the next two states expected to legalize the sharia.

Nigeria is a secular country with a population divided between Muslims

and Christians. The northern region of the country is predominantly Muslim, while Christians dominate the states in the south. The sharia debate was initially sparked by Zamfara Governor Ahmed Sani who said that "only death can stop me [from making sharia law]."

The continuing controversy surrounding sharia has heightened fears of religious persecution and riots and the disintegration of the country. As

individuals, both Christians and Muslim women oppose the legalization of the sharia. Sunday Mbang, president of the CAN argues that it is a threat to democracy itself. "It [the use of the sharia] would deny non-Muslims their

fundamental rights and create disaffection among various groups in the country and endanger the peaceful coexistence of the citizens."

An example of the denial of human rights is already taking affect in Zamfara, the first state to implement sharia. Although the sharia did not

officially take effect until January 2000, effects were already being seen in

the social and economic life in the state before that. According to the sharia, women are not free to move or earn a free wage. As a result, many bus

drivers are refusing to transport women, leaving them stranded. Also, business is beginning to suffer because traders, most of whom are Christians

from southern states, are returning to their home states for fear of persecution when the law takes effect.

Further, the use of sharia has caused disunity and an atmosphere of instability in the formerly unified country. The move to set up sharia comes

six months into President Olusegun Obasanjo's first term. Obasanjo, a Christian, has seen the rise of ethnic tension and a continued vying for power between the economically powerful southern states and the northern states, which have dominated military and civil administration since colonial

times. Setting up sharia has been seen as a political move, aimed at asserting northern authority amid fears that Obasanjo is favoring the south.

"The introduction of sharia in some states could lead to the disintegration of the country," said Anglican Bishop Emmanuel Mani. "We have

lived peacefully hitherto without agitation. Why would some people suddenly

use religion, which is a sensitive issue, to divide the nation and weaken the unity of this country?"

Although the 1999 Constitution declares that "no state or federal government can adopt a state religion," Nigeria's minister of justice and

attorney general, Joseph Agabi, said that "the constitution permits its [the sharia's] limited application in personal and family issues. But states have gone beyond that limit." Now, many, including Christians, are critical of how Obasanjo is handling the "sensitive" issue because nothing has been done to counter the northern states move toward the legalization of sharia. Because the government has done nothing significant, CAN has written to the Nigerian attorney general to challenge the imposition of the law. CAN

general secretary Charles Obasola Williams says, "we have written to the attorney general calling on him to take action against Zamfara. If he does not, we will consider taking our own legal actions."

Also, CAN has demanded that Nigeria withdraw from the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), a Saudi-Arabian-based group of 52 Islamic countries. "Nigeria's membership in OIC was unexplainable because of the multi-religious nature of the country," said Anglican Bishop Rev. Ayo Ladigbolu.

On the Muslim side of things, a former Muslim deputy governor of Lagos state, Alhaja Lateefat Okunnu, says that there is nothing unconstitutional about sharia. "One point we have to get clear is that you cannot be a Muslim without sharia, because sharia is the law . . . for those who call themselves Muslims. We as Muslims believe that Nigeria is a multi-religious society and we are not asking that sharia be imposed on non-Muslims, so there is nothing unconstitutional about sharia." (ENI/Compass Direct/Newsroom)

MOB DESTROYS CHRISTIAN CENTER IN JAKARTA

Jakarta - An unidentified mob attacked a Christian center on December 15

Chairman of Kebbi State chapter of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Rev. James Audu Manga, at a press conference yesterday in Abuja warned the governor to shelve the planned introduction of Sharia or risk that he called mass protest from Christians in the state.

Alleging that Aliero has consistently displayed what he called open partisanship in favour of the Moslems in the state, Manga alleged that the governor had revoked the certificates of occupancy of churches located in the centre of the state capital. He threatened that Christians in the state would do everything within the bounds of the law to protect their fundamental freedoms of worship and religion.

His words: We Christians in Kebbi are ready to die for the church. We are ready to be killed and we are ready to kill. Whoever will stand against our rights, we are ready for whatever cause. We are not just Christians by name, we are Christians to the core, and whoever stands against our faith, we will resist him to the last point.

Rev. Manga also said that his association had petitioned the Kebbi State House of Assembly, asking it to shelve the introduction of the Islamic legal system.

=====
=====xxx

Thursday, 16 December 1999

Nuhu Achebo Naijanews Guardian

Kano Assembly postpones debate on Sharia

KANO State lawmakers yesterday adjourned deliberations on the proposed introduction of Sharia till next month.

The death of a relation of Alhaji Ado Bayero, the Emir, had stalled Tuesday's planned third and final reading of the bill which had last week been endorsed by a joint meeting of Governor Rabiu Kwankwaso, assemblymen, Alhaji Bayero and Islamic leaders.

According to News Agency reports, a member of the House, who pleaded anonymity, said the governor and other officials wanted to calm things down.

=====
=====xxx

NNDJ BRIEFS

Monday 13 December 1999

SOKOTO STATE TO INTRODUCE SHARIA

The government of Sokoto State, which borders Zamfara, has announced a ban on the sale and consumption of alcohol and on prostitution -- to take effect in two weeks' time -- as part of the introduction of Islamic Sharia law. Reports in Zamfara State say alcohol has entirely disappeared from the state, except in the army officers' mess, and that women-only taxis and buses have begun appearing on the streets.

ZAMFARA GOVERNOR SAYS MADE ERRORS

Alhaji Ahmed Sani, the governor of Nigeria's northern Zamfara State, is sporting a new beard as sign of his growing Islamic faith and pronounces himself a changed man from his days at the central bank. The 39-year-old economist won elections at the start of the year to govern this mainly Muslim state of some two million people on a promise to introduce Islamic Sharia law. After taking up office in May, Sani declared Sharia law in Gusau on October 27. Since then, he has been fending off critics in the Christian-dominated press. "Islam is a whole way of life and Sharia is the laws," Sani said in an interview in the governor's office. "Any Muslim who takes political power is obliged to introduce Sharia. It is one of the tenets of the faith," Sani said. "If he does not, he is an unbeliever."

Sani is not new to positions of power in Nigeria and from 1989 to 1993 served in a senior position at the central bank. He admitted to wrong-doing while handling payments supposed to go to ECOMOG, the Nigerian-led west African peacekeeping force sent to Liberia in 1990 at the behest of Nigeria's then military regime. "When I was in the Central Bank, in foreign exchange, I would for example take 800,000 dollars to the (presidential) villa for the ECOMOG operations and sometimes the officer would 'dash' me 10,000 or 5,000 dollars," he said. Was it wrong to accept illicit gifts when it was known to be public money? he was asked. "Yes," he replied. "As you grow older you acquire more faith... If it was now, I would never take that money."

The money, he said, had helped him buy four homes -- one in Gusau and the others in the towns of Sokoto, Bakura and Talatamfara. Asked if he had repaid money acquired at the bank, he said he hadn't. "I allow relatives and other people to stay in my houses." Sani campaigned for the Zamfara State governor's office on the platform that he was going to introduce Sharia. Some voters suspect the sincerity of his attachment to the faith. "Before the election campaign, he was not known as a religious man. It was during the campaign he started talking about Sharia," said one Gusau resident, who asked not to be named. "He has used the Sharia issue politically," the man said, adding he had "yet to be convinced by his (Sani's) sincerity."

Sani himself, described himself as "a good Muslim" and "a changed man" and said that under Sharia law "there can be no siphoning off of funds" in Zamfara State. "We have (secular) laws but they are not followed. If you use the power of divine guidance to implement your laws (Sharia) people will adhere more to those laws than to laws made by man," he said. The areas Sani has cracked down on so far are prostitution and the sale of alcohol, both of which he has declared illegal in the state. "We are making sure that everything in the state is in accordance with Sharia," he said. "'All Muslims all over the world I expect to support me, what I am doing." Mallam Usman Mohammed Zawiyya, assistant principal of the Zamiyya Koranic School in Gusau believes the governor is sincere. "I have total confidence that the governor is sincere," he said in an interview. "We prayed that if it was time to reform society again, Allah should give him victory. If it was not time, Allah should defeat him. He was victorious."

CHRISTIANS THREATEN LITIGATION OVER SHARIA

Nigeria is facing a new challenge to national unity after the country's main Christian organisation yesterday threatened legal action against the imposition of strict Muslim law in the north of the country. The move, by the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) comes six weeks after the northern state of Zamfara implemented sharia – the Islamic system of justice, drawn directly from the Koran. As the Ramadan fast began last Thursday, other Muslim-dominated states were signalling their intent to follow suit. Nigeria, combines traditional religions with Christianity and Islam. There is no reliable estimate of which religion dominates nationally but Muslims are in a large majority in the north, the east is mainly Christian and the south-west is mixed.

CAN, which represents Protestant and Roman Catholic churches, claims that the implementation of sharia is unconstitutional because Nigeria, under its new civilian constitution, is a secular state. The organisation's general secretary, Charles Obasola Williams, said: "There seems to be a sinister motive to this sharia decision. We have written to the attorney general calling on him to take action against Zamfara. If he does not, we will consider taking our own legal action. You cannot have two systems of law – common law and sharia. Many states in the north are now talking about sharia but this runs counter to the well-integrated nature of many parts of the country where there is intermarriage and peaceful cohabitation. We know sharia will work against Christians," he said.

But the current trend, as Nigeria grapples with ethnic tensions, is towards the spread of the official use of sharia in Muslim areas. Last week members of the state assembly in Kano, the most populous region of the north, tabled a Bill calling for sharia. They said that non-Muslims in Kano would be excluded from sharia, as in Zamfara. But CAN and other critics argue that

this is an impossibility because the enforcement of rules such as the ban on drinking alcohol would necessarily affect Christians. Sharia has reportedly been very popular in Zamfara and the state's Muslim leaders are now claiming it is the most law-abiding area of the country. As yet, Zamfara's community courts are not known to have recommended any controversial punishments, such as the amputation of hands for thieves.

Rivers State, in the southern delta region, has threatened to respond by declaring itself a Christian state. CAN also wants Nigeria to withdraw from the 52-nation Organisation of Islamic Conference (IOC), which it joined under military rule. Many observers see sharia trend as a political tool to assert northern authority amid fears that President Obasanjo, a Yoruba and a Baptist, is favouring the south-west. The former military leaders, who ruled for most of the years after independence from Britain in 1960, came mainly from the north. The Lagos-based human rights lawyer, Olisa Agbakoba, said: "Sharia has always been in effect in the north of the country. It has co-existed with common law without incident. What is different now is that, for the first time, it is being used as a political tool."

Kano Assembly postpones debate on Sharia

KANO State lawmakers yesterday adjourned deliberations on the proposed introduction of Sharia till next month.

The death of a relation of Alhaji Ado Bayero, the Emir, had stalled Tuesday's planned third and final reading of the bill which had last week been endorsed by a joint meeting of Governor Rabiu Kwankwaso, assemblymen, Alhaji Bayero and Islamic leaders.

According to News Agency reports, a member of the House, who pleaded anonymity, said the governor and other officials wanted to calm things down.

 =====xxx

Wednesday, December 15, 1999

Nubi Achebo Naijanews

Enahoro, who had described the Sharia issue as "multi-dimensional", questioned the "constitutional validity", "democratic legitimacy" and the "timing" of the introduction of Sharia laws, stating categorically that such a matter of "fundamental political change" ought to have been included in election manifesto or submitted to a referendum.

According to him, "the Sharia issue is a multi-dimensional

conundrum and should be recognized as such. We are dealing here not merely with a religious issue - an issue of religious beliefs - but also with an issue concerned constitutional validity, an issue concerning democratic legitimacy, an issue concerning timing."

The nationalist who said jokingly that he would be returning home in the "new millennium" or in the "new century", explained further that while the constitutionality of the introduction of Sharia in Zamfara State and as proposed in other northern states should be left to the courts, "the normal practice (for democratic legitimacy) is for fundamental political changes to be proposed in election manifestoes or submitted to a referendum." If the proposal passes through either test, continued the septuagenarian, it then becomes democratically legitimate to enact it into law.

He added: "The fundamental question in the Sharia debate boils down to this: If a substantial part of the country wishes to direct its life, organize its local autonomy and order its domestic affairs with a faith, principles and laws which they share with a substantial part of the humanity and immediate neighbours, can you expect for long to deprive them of the right to do so?"

Enahoro, whose speech at the occasion was entitled "Let Us Dare to Conceive, Let Us Dare to Serve and Contrive, and Let Us Dare to Hope," regretted that the rhetoric of democracy in much of Africa, including Nigeria, conceals "mere political theatre." The self-exiled politician added that "when it comes to grappling with the realities of democracy in a multi-nationality or multi-religious setting, the bareness of the rhetoric is exposed."

Against the backdrop of the rising ethnic clashes in Nigeria and the Sharia controversy, Enahoro stated that every passing day in Nigeria throws up new reasons, new arguments and new justifications of the desirability of convening a sovereign national conference. He quoted his warning in 1993 on the lessons for Nigeria from what happened in former Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, USSR and other spots of resurgence of ethnic identity, adding that the warning was still valid in 1999 Nigeria.

"It has, on more than one occasion in our history, been my lot to warn of dangers in our path. We have all paid the price of wanton

disregard of the warnings. Nearly seven years ago, I warned that we needed to build systems and structures to resolve the nationality question in Nigeria.. That warning is as valid today as` in 1993," said Enahoro.

The elder statesman however, expressed optimism that in spite of the problems facing Nigeria, the country could still construct a democracy "which nationalities and religious blocs of Nigeria can find a satisfying life for themselves. Not only can we do so, we must do so. But to do so will demand of us courage and inventiveness."

====xxx

Nigerian News Du Jour BRIEFS
Tuesday 14 December 1999

ISLAM ON THE RISE IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

It is the start of the Islamic holy month of Ramadan and in a dusty district on the outskirts of the sleepy northern Nigerian city of Gusau, thousands gather for traditional midday prayers. The harmattan winds are blowing from the Sahara desert a few hundred miles to the north, filling with sand the air already carrying the call to the faithful from the minarets of the city's many mosques. Gusau, previously a backwater in Africa's most populous country, is the capital of Zamfara State and won attention nationwide in October when its 39-year-old governor, Ahmed Sani, declared Islamic Sharia law across the state.

For Mallam Usman Mohammed Zawiyya, assistant principal of the Zamiyya Koranic school, the largest in Gusau, things have already changed for the better since the declaration. "Before the governor was elected there was a lot of wrongdoing -- stealing, drunkenness and fornication. But with the declaration, people have more faith. They are starting to be reformed, they are starting to live better," he said in an interview in his home a few hundred yards (metres) from the Zawiyya mosque. "The Sharia has always existed in northern Nigeria, for many centuries," he went on. "When the (British) colonialists arrived, they withdrew some aspects which they said were not part of a secular society. Now it is being restored."

Sani, sporting a new beard, says the Christians who form around 10 percent of the state's two million population, have no reason to object to Sharia law. Nigeria's 120 million population is split roughly evenly between Muslims and Christians and its constitution makes clear that the country cannot adopt a state religion. "Sharia will only apply to Muslims and does not affect Christians," Sani said in an interview in his office. "This is a Muslim state. The Muslims want Sharia. If someone tries to stop Sharia there will be

chaos," he said. "Islam is a whole way of life and Sharia is the laws." On Thursday, officials in Kano and Sokoto, two other northern states, with larger populations than Zamfara, announced their own steps to introduce Sharia. The rising attention on Islam has heightened fears for the future of the country which is deeply divided along religious and ethnic lines. Christian leaders have sharply criticised Zamfara's attempts to introduce Sharia and declared it unconstitutional.

Peter Dembo, Zamfara State chairman of the Christian Association of Nigeria, said Christians in the region were "seriously worried" since Sani came to power. The governor has plans to reduce the number of churches in the city, he said, claiming that harassment of Christians has grown in past weeks. "In Gusau, in Zamfara State, people have been living in peace, Christians and Muslims. Since the governor came to power, people have been living in fear," he said. For ordinary people in Gusau, the most striking changes have been the virtual disappearance of the prostitutes who used to hang around the main hotel in Gusau, the separation of schools for boys and girls, the introduction of women-only taxis and the closure of all but two of the city's bars.

At the Gusau Games Club, where people used to gather to play tennis, darts, volley ball and drink, 68-year-old Shehu Audu told AFP he fears for the watchman job he has held for the past 17 years. "Since Sharia (was declared) people are afraid to come here and they stop," he said, outside the empty bar. "It is no good for Christians this Sharia," he said. Across town, business is booming at the Officers Mess, a dingy bar run by the federal army for army officers and hence immune from state laws. Lance Corporal Peter Tizhe, the bar's manager, says around 200 people come every night to drink and dance, sometimes till dawn. "This is now the only place they can come. They come because it is army and the governor knows he cannot stop them. Everybody comes, Christian, Muslim, military and civilian."

Women's group have so far expressed little concern about Sharia and appear to welcome the provision of women-only taxis and buses, circulating around town to pick up all-female groups of passengers. Fatima Hassan, a 57-year-old woman getting into a woman-only taxi in a market on the edge of town, said the introduction of the taxis had reduced the harassment women used to suffer from men here. "I am very happy. We feel relaxed. Before it was difficult for women here," she said.

What remains in doubt is who is the constitutionality of Sharia in Nigeria and who will enforce it when, according to Sani, Sharia courts will actually start operating here at the end of January. "The police will enforce Sharia. They have to," Sani said. "If they refuse to, we will find another way. We have voluntary organisations, Islamic youth groups," he said. In a quiet move, President Olusegun Obasanjo last month decided to bring in a new police

commissioner for Zamfara. The new man is a Christian, as is his deputy, and says he has no instructions to implement Sharia law and will not tolerate anyone else doing so.

=====xxx

Today In Nigerian Newspapers
P.M. News (Lagos)
November 22, 1999

Challenge Sharia In Court, Babalola

Foremost lawyer, Chief Afe Babalola (SAN) has declared the adoption of Sharia law by the Zamfara State Government as a gross assault on the Nigerian Constitution and the rule of law.

He, therefore, wants a court action instituted immediately by the Federal Government or a concert of states against the Zamfara State Government to prevent it from operating the controversial law, which, according to him, besides flagrantly violating some fundamental human rights of Nigerians as provided in the constitution, bears serious implication for the stability of the country. - The

=====xxx

Nigerian News Du Jour BRIEFS
Monday 22 November 1999

The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) has began mobilisation of its members for its proposed December 1 rally against the adoption of Sharia by Zamfara State. The association earlier directed all Christians nationwide to join the march tagged "No to Sharia and Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC) in Nigeria" rally at the weekend sent messages to all church leaders and their followers of the rally. Members of Pentecostal Churches were also directed to embark on a three-day fasting and prayer beginning from Friday in order to boldly challenge the enemy in a loud voice as men of God, just as Elijah, in the land of Israel".

=====xxx

Bishop Commends Obasanjo
P.M. News (Lagos)
November 23, 1999
By Philipson Abah

Lagos - The government of President Olusegun Obasanjo has

received a pat on the back for its adherence to the rule of law amongst many other populist programmes being adopted.

General Overseer of the Redeemed Evangelical Mission (TREM), Bishop Mike Okonkwo said at the weekend that given the enormity of the socio-economic problems which President Obasanjo inherited from the military and the expressed good intention of the government, Nigerians should support and give the administration a chance while "we continue to pray God to accomplish his purpose for Nigeria".

"We commend the present administration's programme and statement of intention and the few investment in the underlying macro-economic factors such as contracts to reconstruct eroded roads in Anambra State and other parts of Eastern Nigeria and Niger-Delta. We call on government to formulate appropriate policies that will address poverty beyond mere rhetorics," he said.

Bishop Okankwo who is also the President of the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria also condemned in strong terms the adoption of Sharia Law in Zamfara State, submitting that the action is an invitation to national calamity as non-conformists in the state are bound to be attacked by Almajiris.

Calling on President Obasanjo to waste no time in resolving the Sharia issue, he urged the National Assembly to rise to its constitutional responsibility.

Also commenting on the spate of violence rocking the country, the Bishop said government should take steps to crack down on the various movements as the state of lawlessness in Lagos and major states of the federation are score cards on the abilities of the government.

Bishop Mike Okonkwo spoke on the occasion of his nomination for the award of Millennium Man by members of his church ahead of this year's Kingdom Life World Conference '99 which ends on 29 November at TREM International Headquarters Anthony, Lagos.

====XXX

Bauchi Rejects Sharia
Today In Nigerian Newspapers
P.M. News (Lagos)
November 23, 1999

The campaign by lovers of Sharia law to popularise the

NNDJ BRIEFS - Friday 19 November 1999

Militant Muslim youths in Ilorin, the Kwara State capital, have pulled down the fence of the Federal High Court building, in protest against a law suit challenging the introduction of Sharia law in Zamfara State. The suit, instituted by the Eastern Union in Ilorin, against the Zamfara State Government, seeks to protect the fundamental human rights of the Igbo community in Zamfara State against being circumscribed by the newly-introduced Islamic legal system.

=====
=====xxx

Najanet

Monday, 22 November 1999

House summons NITEL, others over state of telecoms

Sonny Aragba-Akpore, Communications Correspondent

Babalola urges prosecution of Zamfara govt

>From Iyabo Sotunde, Ibadan

EMINENT lawyer, Chief Afe Babalola (SAN), has urged the Federal Government to begin the prosecution of Zamfara State Government over its introduction of Sharia law, saying the action violated the constitution.

Babalola argued that by the virtue of provisions of the 1999 Constitution which guaranteed fundamental human rights including right to freedom of religion and dignity of human persons, no unit of the federation was empowered to declare a state religion.

The legal luminary who specifically cited sections 10, 36 (9) (12), 34 (1)(a), 42, of the constitution said the introduction of Islamic code by the state was a breach of the law.

He said: From the day it comes to effect, everybody living in Zamfara is bound to follow the doctrine of Islam, the exemption given to non-moslems is limited to his right to object to being tried by the Sharia court, it stops short of saying that he is not exempted from living in Zamfara State in accordance with the new law.

"For instance, if 'A' and 'B' commit adultery, 'A', a male moslem

will be beheaded in the public but 'B', a non-moslem will only be fired which will amount to discrimination and a violation of section 42 of the 1999 Constitution.

The Senior Advocate who reviewed the provisions of the Sharia legal system as stipulated by the Zamfara State Government, argued that the wholesale adoption of Sharia was an assault on the Constitution.

On claims that the action has not made the state an Islamic state; Babalola argued that "what the Zamfara state government has done is not mere proclamation but institutionalisation of Islamic law through the state Legislative Assembly making it a state law."

He said: "The mere fact that the law aids Islamic religion as against others contravene section 10 of the 1999 Constitution. The intention of the constitution is to make the country a secular state in matters of religion... it means that nobody shall be discriminated against by the state on the ground of religion it must treat every citizen equally regardless of the belief or religion."

Citing instances of conflict between the Sharia law and the constitution, the eminent lawyer pointed out that the imposition of the Islamic criminal law negated section 3(2) of the Penal Code which abolished customary criminal law in Northern States.

"Stealing and adultery under the penal code attracts only imprisonment or fine whereas the penalty under Islamic law is death which contravened section 34(1) (a) of the constitution relating to the right to dignity of human person," he added.

====xxx

Monday, 15 November 1999

Guardian News

WIN condemns Sharia, students appeal against NYSC posting to Zamfara

>From Isa Abdulsalami, Jos

SHARIA, as being proposed by the Zamfara State Government, is a ploy to further subjugate the Nigerian woman under the cloak of

religion, by a male-dominated society, the Women-In-Nigeria (WIN) has said.

In a statement in Jos, Plateau State by its National Co-ordinating Secretary, Mrs. Benedicta Daudu, the organisation also said the Islamic legal code is inconsistent with the 1999 Constitution and, therefore, null and void.

The Sharia would deny women the right to free movement as well as work and earn a decent wage, thereby keeping them in perpetual servitude in an already patriarchal society, it stated.

"In a society ravaged by SAP (Structural Adjustment Programme), that has made nonsense of most families, living condition, this is a wicked ploy to snuff out the life of the already marginalised women. What will happen to our mothers and sisters who have had benefit of education at public expense if they will not be allowed to work and make use of the knowledge acquired," the statement queried.

It added: "Why should they just remain in the home and rot away with their education? Why should a part of (the) caliphate of old that produced Nana Asman, Othman Danfodio's daughter, allow a demagogue of a governor to enact a law that will relegate women to the background?"

According to the organisation, "in every sphere of nation-building, women have contributed immensely, intelligently and have worked side by side with their male counterparts. In some instances, women have even performed better than their male colleagues, their disadvantaged position notwithstanding. The role of women as far as Zamfara's Sharia law is concerned is that of baby-making machines, pleasure objects to men and chattels."

It believes that the introduction of Sharia law is a ploy by the governor to shirk his duty to improve the materials and spiritual conditions of the citizens, irrespective of religion and state of origin, resident within Zamfara State.

The introduction of the Sharia in the state is capable of undermining the corporate existence of the country's secularity, it added.

The group said: "The Presidency seems not to be bothered, probably in the spirit of democracy. But we wonder what would happen if Zamfara State or another state had declared a socialist

state with its supreme laws because it is opposed to the selling of our collective wealth and heritage under the guise of privatisation."

WIN called on the Zamfara State Government to immediately repeal the law, calling on the Federal Government to prevail on the state over the issue.

Students of the University of Jos have appealed to the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) not to post any of them to Zamfara except it is his or her wish.

A statement by their leader, Mr. Josiah Hosea Onuche and Public Relations Officer, Mr. Minerry Iduh, said UNIJOS students were well-mannered and did not need the Sharia to shape their morals.

====xxx

Guardian News Nov 17, 1999

OPC vows to oppose Sharia's adoption in Kwara

>From Abiodun Fagbemi,Ilorin

THE leader of the Oodua People's Congress (OPC), in Kwara State, Alhaji Abdulkarim Olola Kasum, has promised prompt counter ation if Sharia law is introduced in the state.

Speaking ahead of plans by some Sharia proponents to stage a rally in the state, Kasum warned that the action, if carried out, would occasion unprecedented unrest in the state.

Kasum, who disclosed OPC's stand, in an interview with reporters on Monday in Ilorin, said: "The correct procedure is for the protagonists of Sharia to sponsor a bill to the state House of Assembly, to be followed by a vote.

"Besides, the priority of Kwara state today is not a pro-Sharia rally but good governance, regular payment of salary and job satisfaction for civil servants.

"Industrialisation of the state and security of lives and property of the citizens, are equally important. Anything short of this will be adequately countered by the state OPC," he said.

Conceding that the nation's constitution allows the right to practise one's religion, the OPC chieftain warned that such right

should be pursued cautiously.

He advised Governor Mohammed Lawal to restrain "the same people who organised the infamous Abacha solidarity rally in Kwara State in 1995," from re-enacting "the gory scene under the guise of Sharia."

====xxx

Newswatch Updated Nov 14, 1999
Reported by Geoffrey Ekenna.

To Hell with Everybody

Zamfara State governor defies court and public protests,
introduces sharia law

By Olu Ojewale

Defiance was the word as the Zamfara State government shrugged off complaints across the country and went ahead with the introduction of the controversial sharia law, last Wednesday. The colourful ceremony witnessed prayers and recitation of the Qoran. Thousands of people from across the country and some parts of West Africa, graced the occasion.

In his few remarks, Ahmed Sani, the governor called on Muslims to consider the sharia law as one of the fundamental issues to be respected in order to bring justice to them. He also enjoined all other state governors in the Muslim community to follow in his foot-step.

The law becomes effective January 27, next year.

The introduction of sharia in the state has caused consternation among non-Muslim in the State some of who are said to have fled the State. There were reports of unprecedented withdrawal of large sums of money by departing customers, thereby causing liquidity problem for banks.

Some of the commercial banks were said to be considering pulling out of the state altogether because of the law.

Sani was said to have kept reassuring non-muslims and non-indigenes residing in the state that there was nothing to fear about. Perhaps for the umpteenth time, Sani assured

non-muslims again last week, saying, "Sharia law is only for muslims and I am assuring you that non-muslims will not be affected. You should not fear anything".

But fears continued to dog the suspicious non-indigenes. Even the governor's previous meetings with tribal leaders in the state have not helped to persuade many non-indigenes and christians to stay back.

It is not difficult to know why. Reports indicated that no sooner had Sani signed into law, the two bills passed by the state assembly authorising sharia law system, October 8, than some muslim zealots went on a rampage. Two churches were torched in Gusau during the rampage. These were include - the Methodist Church and the Christian Evangelical Fellowship of Nigeria.

B.A. Eguavon, secretary-general of Christian Association of Nigeria, CAN, in the state alleged that one christian accused of an offence bled to death, when his two arms were amputated recently. The sharia authorises amputation of the arm or leg of a convicted thief.

Reports further indicated that it took the personal intervention of the governor to secure the release of 20 people accused of operating beer parlours recently. Sani said the accused, mostly christians, should be compensated if any of their goods or property were destroyed in the cause of the arrest.

That has neither stopped the debate over the constitutionality of the law, nor persuaded Sani from dropping the Islamic law. The governor even defied the court injunction, restraining his government from going ahead with the law last week.

Speaking on the BBC last Wednesday, Sani argued that the court injunction was not imposed by a court in his state and neither was it filed by any Zamfara State indigenes. Emeka Nwosu and Vincent Osakwe, both lawyers in Lagos, had taken the governor to a Lagos high court, praying for an interim injunction restraining his administration from going ahead with the Sharia law. Dolapo Akinsanya, a high court judge, granted their prayers and slated further hearing in the case to last Wednesday.

Sani was supported by participants at a one-day seminar on the implementation of the sharia law in Kaduna. In a communique issued at the end of the conference, the participants resolved that the implementation of the sharia law in the northern states

was both constitutional and irreversible. They said critics of the law were either ignorant or beclouded by prejudice.

The communique cited Section 38 of the 1999 constitution, saying it supports their right to the law. They cited Sections 10, 33, 39 and 277 of the same constitution as supporting their cause without violating the constitution.

The communique also referred to the conference of all Nigerian judges held in Abuja, September 4 to 11, last year, saying it recognised the need for the sharia law in the nation's legal system.

Lateef Adegbite, a lawyer and secretary-general of the Nigeria Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, has argued on the same line. Adegbite said that sharia law is a law prescribed by God for believers and that it is obligatory for Muslims to abide by the law.

He argued that the 1999 constitution recognises the right of any state to adopt the sharia law. He cited Section 6, subsection 4 (k) of Nigeria to buttress the point. The law empowers a state to create courts by law which shall "exercise jurisdiction at first instance or on matters with respect to which a house of assembly may make laws".

Caleb Atolagbe, a lawyer and pastor, Sharon Christian Centre, Lagos, is convinced that the adoption of the sharia law was ill-advised. He told Newswatch: "Sharia law is supposed to be private and personal laws of the Muslim. Essentially it covers things like marriage, writing a will, inheritance, etc".

Atolagbe insists that "the constitution does not recognise the sharia or Islamic law as something that should apply to any state". He warned against trying christian offenders in a sharia court.

Sunday Mbang, president of CAN said he was worried because the adoption of the sharia legal system could disintegrate the country. Said he: "Apart from being unconstitutional, the idea is preconceived to destabilise our nascent democracy and collective unity; it is targeted towards achieving some selfish goals".

Some christian leaders feared that the whole of the north might systematically be turned to a Muslim region through compulsory Islamic education. They also feared that christians and

THERE were hints at the weekend that the police may have been directed by the Federal Government not to have anything to do with the enforcement of the Sharia law introduced by the Zamfara State government just as the Christian Association of Nigerian (CAN) has resolved to meet President Olusegun Obasanjo on the issue.

Police authorities in Abuja may have also put in place a contingency security arrangement in anticipation of violence that may erupt when the implementation of the law fully takes off in January, next year.

Although section 17, sub-section 3 of the Sharia bill empowers a Sharia Court to authorise a police officer to perform all or any of the duties contained in the law, sources close to the police headquarters in Gusau said the police will not enforce any law that it does not understand its workings and applicability.

Giving credence to this stand, the state police commissioner, Alhaji Ahmed Abdulkadir told The Guardian On Sunday: 'Police has no role in the enforcement of the Sharia law now because we have not received any directive to come in and play any significant role.'

He added: "We are not going to intervene or take part in the enforcement of the Sharia or any law that is in conflict with the constitution of Nigeria because we are Federal Police, not Zamfara State police. So, the Inspector General has to direct us on what to do, but up till now we have not received any specific directive."

Abdulkadir said the police is prepared for any eventuality and is studying the situation very closely with view to taking action accordingly. "We will not enforce any law that goes contrary and in conflict with the Nigerian law because we have sworn to defend the country and the citizens as a whole.

"We, the police are for Nigeria and a single police, but if the place is too hot for me, I can request for transfer and let the headquarters send another person who will enforce the Sharia for the state. I can't do anything that is contrary to the constitution of Nigeria," the police boss said.

But the Zamfara State government is insisting that it is the constitutional responsibility of the law enforcement agencies to

enforce the Sharia because the adoption, application and the provisions of the Islamic Law were brought into being in conformity with the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Chairman of the joint aid monitoring groups on the application of Sharia in Zamfara, Dr. Atiku Balarabe told The Guardian On Sunday that it is the constitutional duty of the police to enforce the Sharia as laws enacted by the Zamfara government and backed by the judiciary.

According to him, "the state has its own legislature which makes laws for its citizens and certainly if such laws are in conformity with the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the police and other security agencies have no option than to enforce it."

Section 17 (iii) of the Sharia bill provides that a Sharia Court may authorise a police officer to perform any duties mentioned in the Sharia law in so far as they relate to the criminal jurisdiction of the court and any police officer who shall be in possession of any criminal process shall be presumed to be authorised to execute such process.

The joint aid monitoring committee, according to him, has been mandated to mobilise the enforcement agencies to ensure compliance with the Sharia and to liaise with different relevant bodies that can assist the state government in the administration of the law.

Balarabe added that Moslem youths have been mobilised and formed into vigilante aid monitoring groups to assist the police and ease its enforcement of the law, stressing that members of the group will monitor compliance with the law and report any violation to the police which will take action on the arrest and prosecution of the offenders.

Balarabe who addressed about 350 members of the monitoring group who gathered at Bungudu, headquarters of Bungudu local government area for training at the weekend enjoined them to be orderly and peaceful, stressing that their duty was not to arrest or enforce the law but to report any violations to the law enforcement agencies.

However, the police high command in Abuja was said to have put in place a contingency security arrangement to ensure quick response

to any violence that may likely occur when the Sharia fully comes into force in January.

A source at the Police Headquarters in Gusau, told The Guardian On Sunday that the mobile units in Abuja, Kaduna and other neighbouring states have been placed on the alert and ready to move into Gusau at a shortest notice.

Speaking on the police combat readiness, the Police Commissioner, Alhaji Ahmed Abdulkadir said his command is studying the situation and prepared for any eventuality, stressing that if anybody takes law into his hands, such person will be dealt with according to the law.

"But we are not expecting any violence between the Moslems and the Non-Moslems because they have been living together in peace for a long time," he said, adding that until violence happens and when it happens, the police is fully prepared to do what it is supposed to do.

Asked to comment on the formation of aid monitoring vigilante groups by the state government, he explained that the police cannot do anything now since "we have not seen any group in place.

"But we will have to wait and see if they form any vigilante group that is contrary to the constitution and we will act by getting them arrested because the constitution recognises only one police for the country."

Meanwhile, the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) resolved at its fifth General Assembly which ended in Benin last Thursday, to meet with President Obasanjo on the Sharia issue.

According to the secretary-general of the association, Mr. Charles Obasola Williams, the general assembly, which is the highest decision-making organ of CAN, discussed extensively the Sharia issue "and strongly denounced it".

"Before we decide on anything, we have arranged to meet with His Excellency, President Olusegun Obasanjo to let him know our fears and the implications of the Sharia law in this country. We also noted with satisfaction the action of some Christians who have taken the Zamfara State governor to court over the matter. In the same manner, we revisited Nigeria's membership of the OIC (Organization of Islamic Conference) and re-stated our opposition

to Nigeria's membership", Williams said.

Feelers from the general assembly meeting indicated that some other Christian groups such as the Christian Lawyers Forum may be heading for the court over the Sharia matter.

During the meeting, Dr. Sunday Mbang was re-elected to serve for another four years as the association's president. In the same manner, Most Rev. John Olufemi Onaiyekan, the Archbishop of Catholic province of Abuja, was re-elected as vice-president.

=====xxx

Nigerian News Du Jour

NNDJ Wednesday November 10, 1999 ISSUE - Zamfara's Sharia

Features:

1. Sharia, Niger-Delta, A Threat To Democracy (by President Obasanjo)
2. Nothing Can Change My Mind on Sharia (by Governor Sani)
3. We Chide Zamfara (by Evangelical Church of West Africa ECWA)
4. Stop Federal Subvention to Zamfara (by Women-In-Nigeria WIN)

Vanguard: 2nd Lead Story

....Sharia, N-Delta, threat to democracy OBASANJO

By Chioma Ugwunabo & Victoria Humbe, Abuja

PRESIDENT Olusegun Obasanjo said yesterday that the introduction of the Sharia system in Zamfara State, the strike action by university teachers and the violence in the Niger Delta were posing a threat to democracy in the country.

The President spoke at a one-day National Conference of Womens Non-governmental Organisations at the ECOWAS Secretariat in Abuja.

According to him, "if our new experiment in democracy is to succeed, women as mothers and major stakeholders in our collective future must marshal all efforts to assist government in dousing tension in different parts of the country.

"I am referring to the tension in the Niger Delta being precipitated

by the youths, the ongoing strike action by the university teachers, violence in the Ilaje area masterminded by youths and the wrangling arising from the attempt to institutionalise Sharia in some states. All these as you will no doubt agree, do not augur well for meaningful progress and development."

The President who was represented by the Minister of Defence, Lt.-Gen. Theophilus Danjuma (rtd.) restated governments commitment to providing the enabling environment for development and programme that would move the nation forward, adding that this could be possible in an atmosphere of peace, entrenchment of the rule of law and orderliness.

The President had during his recent visit to the United States declared that the introduction of the Sharia system in Zamfara was unconstitutional.

Gov. Ahmed Sani Yarima of Zamfara State himself vowed yesterday in Abuja that nothing could reverse the Sharia law in his state.

He spoke in an interview in Abuja.

According to him, "nothing can make me change my mind, only death."

The governor pointed out that the controversy surrounding the implementation of Sharia was only being orchestrated by mischief-makers.

He stated that the Nigerian constitution had always made provision for Sharia.

His words: "We are only trying to reform Sharia, it has been there in our constitution since 1960.

"I am a Muslim and I believe in Allah and in the day of judgement. I believe there is another world after this so every Muslim should subject himself to Sharia.

"The constitution clearly states that every Nigerian is entitled to freedom of worship, freedom of religion, including freedom to practise, observe, propagate his religion. That is standard human rights, and that is clear enough."

He stated that the adoption of Sharia law by the state should not be interpreted as adoption of Islam as the state religion.

"If I want to adopt Islam in my state as state religion, there wont be

high court, no magistrate court, no churches, nothing.

"So we are only saying that Muslims should have Sharia why non-Muslims should have conventional courts."

Vanguard Transmitted Wednesday, 10 November, 1999

Guardian
Wednesday, 10 November 1999

Nothing can change my mind on Sharia, says Sani

From Emeka Nwankpa, Abuja

"NOTHING can make me change my mind on the Sharia, it's only death," the youthful controversial Zamfara State Governor Ahmed Sani declared yesterday at a meeting of the National Council of States in Abuja.

Sporting an Islamic scholar's beard, apparently cultivated after the council's last meeting, the governor, who had earlier sat alone before opening up to his colleagues and prying reporters, made the declaration before the entrance of President Olusegun Obasanjo.

He maintained that his action was constitutional, saying: "Every religion is entitled to freedom of worship; religion, including freedom to propagate that religion and practice it. Islam is a way of life for Moslems."

"Section 10 of the constitution merely states that there should not be a state religion," he said, which was why common courts were still allowed in Zamfara.

"What we are saying is that Moslems should adopt Sharia in the state, while the common law goes to the other people," he said, adding that he was willing to use government's money to build courts which would specialise in the canon law for Christians. "Let them have their own court and we have ours," he declared.

Attributing the current negative reactions against the Islamic legal system to "mischief makers" and "extremists," which he said Islam frowned against, the governor said he was not introducing Sharia, but only trying to reform it as it had been in the constitution since 1990, adding that indigenes of the state would be continually

enlightened on the issue and maintained that its introduction would help develop the state.

Guardian

Wednesday, 10 November 1999

Denomination chides Zamfara

From Isa Abdulsami, Jos

THE launching of Sharia law in Zamfara State by Governor Ahmed Sani is tantamount to secession, the Evangelical Church of West Africa (ECWA) has stated.

ECWA claimed that the action of the governor was a declaration of war against the Christian faith and Nigeria as a nation, adding that the action was a violation of his oath of office.

The position of ECWA is articulated in a statement issued yesterday by its National General Secretary, Dr. Musa Asake, titled: "The position of ECWA on the infamous proclamation of Sharia law in Zamfara State."

ECWA believes that the utterances of the governor on the issue so far are provocative, backward and clearly show him as having little regard for religious tolerance, peace and unity of the country.

"His claim that Moslems constitute 99 per cent of the population of Zamfara State is incorrect. Having clearly shown himself as an Islamic fundamentalist, he has disqualified himself as being unfit to govern Zamfara State for a day longer," the statement added.

The statement added that the proclamation of Sharia legal system by the governor was a transgression of sections 10 and 271 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The evangelicals said that the assurance given to the non-Moslems that their interests will be protected was misleading and amounted to falsehood.

"We have no faith in it. Not when Governor Sani seems to be consolidating with the establishment of the Ministry of Religious Affairs to further Islamic cause in Zamfara. Not when the shops and business outlets of non-Moslems in Zamfara are being systematically ruined in the enforcement of Sharia.

"Not when some non-Moslems are already languishing in prison under the new regime. Surely the non-Moslems and, doubtless, the Christians are the prime targets of this infamous declaration and the laws that follow in Zamfara State."

The ECWA faithfuls claimed that the Methodist Church in Gusau has been demolished. "Similarly, the Winners Chapel and the Deeper Life churches have also been marked for demolition. In the same vein, about 20 Christians have been imprisoned. These are few instances of the iniquities being perpetrated in Zamfara State against the Christians at the moment.

"Let no one be deceived. The emergence of Sharia is inimical and prejudicial to non-Moslems and, more particularly, Christians," it alleged.

It also called on the Federal Government to summon an emergency joint meeting of the Council of States, Federal Executive Council to openly prevail on Governor Sani to resign honourably his position over the introduction of Sharia.

Also, ECWA wants the Federal Attorney-General to initiate a legal proceeding against Zamfara State to formally "nullify this invalid piece of legislation," blaming the National Assembly for apparently keeping quiet.

Vanguard: National Newsreel

WIN urges FG to stop subventions to Zamfara State

By Comfort Ughoro

WOMEN in Nigeria (WIN) has described as objectionable the introduction of Sharia law by the Zamfara state government.

In a communiqué issued at the end of its National Executive Council meeting held in Kaduna and signed by Benedicta Dauda, WIN stated: "The action of the Zamfara state governor is objectionable, because in a multi-religious country such as Nigeria, its actions are bound to infringe on the rights of non-Muslims in the state; secondly, the experience in other countries who practice this law indicates that

Sharia is usually utilised to deprive women of their liberties.

Also, the statement noted that what Zamfara state has done was to declare that it was no longer a part of Nigeria as its actions contravene section 10, chapters 1 and 2 of the Nigerian constitution respectively. If it refuses to retrace its steps, the Federal Government should forthwith stop all subventions to it.

Also, WIN is disturbed by the emerging pattern of disrespect for the rule of law and the contravention of laws by those who have sworn to uphold the law.

According to the communiqué, "A governor who obtained his power from the constitution has felt no compunction in violating its provisions for the sake of political convenience" WIN reiterated its support for freedom of worship and other human rights, "the provisions of the constitution and the rule of law must be held inviolate, particularly by public officials."

Furthermore, "the Tinubu/Enwerem scandal portends ill for the nation and deludes the quality of democracy in Nigeria," the statement said. WIN supports all on-going efforts to uncover the truth about elected officials. "We further condemn the attack on Gani Fawehinmi which took place in connection with the Tinubu saga."

Also, WIN commended the Benue state House of Assembly for being the first state in Nigeria to elect a woman to lead the House as speaker; and was impressed by the high number of women in the state executive.

The meeting, however, expressed disappointment that at the national level, women continue to be marginalised from decision-making positions.

WIN also commended the Edo state House of Assembly for outlawing female circumcision in the state. According to the statement, "We call on other state House of Assemblies to take a cue and enact laws which will target the well-being of their people.

Vanguard Transmitted Wednesday, 10 November, 1999

=====
 =====xxx

State Of Emergency Likely In Zamfara Over Sharia

P.M. News (Lagos)

November 9, 1999

By Adewale Busari

Lagos - A state of emergency may after all be declared in Zamfara State due to the introduction of Sharia Law if the Supreme Court eventually shares the view of President Obasanjo and declares Sharia illegal.

If the interpretation of the constitution declares Governor Ahmed Sani's initiative void, then Section 305 may be applied on Zamfara State to forestall a breakdown of law and order with a view to upholding the concept of federalism.

A lawyer, Mr. Paul C Ananaba who is also the author of the yet-to-be launched book titled: "The Fundamental Right To Religion" disclosed to pressmen that Section 305 of the 1999 constitution conferred on the president, powers to declare a state emergency on any state that contravenes the provisions of the constitution.

According to him, Section 38, 275 provides for Sharia Law which has been in vogue since 1900. However, Section 1 says the law must conform with already established common law of the federation.

Although sections 32, 39, 40, 41 provide for freedom of religion, the position of Section 10 and 45 made it mandatory that no state shall declare or make a particular religion its official religion so as to affirm the secularity of the nation without infringing on everybody's right to religion, belief and freedom of movement.

Mr. Paul Ananaba described the issue of Sharia as a national problem which needs prompt attention from the National Assembly members to justify taxpayers' money expended on them.

The writer also called on the Attorney General of the federation to open up on the issue and explain the position of the federal government. He berated the attitude of some greedy religious leaders who did not take into cognizance the issue of security and crowd control which resulted into the death of about 16 people in the last Benin Crusade by Rev. Reinhard Bonnke. On the issue of educational advancement, he called on the federal government to support research work as well as cause more books to be published on religion.

=====xxx

Guardian 11-5-99

Adegbite cautions press on Sharia

From Charles Coffie Gyamfi, Abeokuta

THE Secretary-General of the Nigeria Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), Dr. Lateef Adegbite, yesterday cautioned the people, especially the press against over-sensationalising the Sharia issue to avoid security problems for the government.

Reacting to an alleged call by 23 bishops of the Anglican Church that the Zamfara State Governor Ahmed Sani be prosecuted for treason, for introducing the Sharia law, Adegbite said: "that would be an overkill." "What we should do at this time is to ensure that the interests of all are protected," Adegbite, who spoke in Abeokuta yesterday, added. He argued that "since freedom of worship is allowed in this country, both the Christians and Moslems must be allowed to freely practise their religions, Sharia, inclusive."

On whether it would be proper if Christian-dominated states decide to introduce canon laws, Adegbite said: "Let them do it, it would be better."

He added: "I am surprised that the Christians have abandoned that canon laws, even though I know why."

According to him, Christians have to abandon their Canon law because the church wanted to dominate the state while the state wanted to dominate the church, adding: "But that is not the case with Sharia." Said he: "If they (Christians) want it (Canon law), we Moslems won't have anything to do with it."

Adegbite appealed to the media to be cautious in reporting the Sharia issue.

He blamed a section of the media for over-sensationalising the issue, saying this was gradually raising tension in the country.

Bode George advises govt on Sharia

By Chukwudi Abiandu, Political Correspondent

FORMER military governor of Ondo State, Commodore Olabode George (rtd), has implored President Olusegun Obasanjo to seek legal interpretation of the constitution on the controversial introduction of Sharia in Zamfara State.

George, at a press conference yesterday to flag off his campaign for the post of national deputy chairman (South) of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) in Lagos, believes that the question of the legality or otherwise of the Zamfara State precedence can only be answered by the judiciary.

Stressing that "something has to be done," he recalled that the entity called Nigeria did not come about as a natural setting. The former military governor pointed out that the British, because of economic reasons, brought "nations among nations" under the same umbrella. He said: "Why we have been having this perpetual problem is that we've been trying to fuse all these various multi-ethnic, multi-cultural,

multi-religious nations. There is no nation anywhere in the world that is like Nigeria."

He, therefore, urged strict adherence to the constitution in order to keep the nation as one.

George said that since the Zamfara State governor and critics of the Sharia express diverse views, the judiciary must be asked to interpret what the constitution says about religion.

"If you have disagreement on the constitution, the only arm that can interpret it is the judiciary. I believe, very soon, that the government must act. This is the difference between a military government and a democratic government. But that can be taken care of," he said.

"What you have to do is to immediately go to the courts, to interpret that section of the constitution, and tell who is wrong that you are wrong, and to change the decision," George added.

On the recent clash between Oodua People's Congress (OPC) and Ijaw youths in Lagos, the former military governor, hoped that the government would reconcile the feuding parties.

=====
=====xxx

Guardian Nove 7 '99

Activist Condemns Religious Laws As Anti-women

By

Kayode Ogunbunmi Staff Correspondent

NIGERIANS have been urged not be to intimidated "into accepting retrograde decrees simply because they are done under the guise of religion, as these might lead to another bloody civil war in the country.

According to Ayesha Imam, regional co-ordinator, Africa and Middle East, for Women Living Under Muslim Laws, (WLUML), the introduction of laws purporting to be 'Islamic' or 'Christian' are not only unconstitutional, but also pose great danger to human rights especially women's basic human rights.

Dr. Imam, speaking at the 1999 Feminism in the Muslim World Leadership Institute programme held in Lagos, last week, condemned the adoption of the Sharia by the government of Zamfara State. "The Governor of Zamfara state is quoted as stating that he is instituting these draconian so-called 'Islamic' laws in order to fight prostitution, gambling and other social vices. Violating women's right will not do that."

She said the prohibition of women from travelling in the same public transport as men is a denial of women's rights to movement and rights to freedom of association. In a situation where there is inadequate transport facility, it will mean that only women car owners will be able to travel and move around.

"Women not only contribute to family income in many households, but women are the sole income-earner in the household very often. This provision means that women will be unable to get to their jobs and thus women's right to earn a livelihood will also be compromised" she added. Affirming that the invocation of religious codes is "a whim of conservatives", she wondered why a state like Zamfara did not embrace

for assistance to Moslem communities in non-member countries of OIC, in addition to setting up of trust funds.

The Guardian On Sunday the bank is also expected to extend training facilities for personnel engaged in development activities in the new Islamic state for effective take-off of the sharia legal system.

The loan, according to the tenets of Islamic banking is interest-free and only repayable on the terms agreed to by the state government.

Also in order to encourage the indigenes to be fully integrated into the sharia norm, commercial banks are being encouraged to commence interest-free banking services to individuals.

Accordingly, a branch of Habib Bank located in Gusau, the state capital, was said to have displayed signs last week showing "interest free banking is obtained here", in front of its office.

Individuals may not also require collateral in securing loans from the banks that operate the interest-free banking.

Meanwhile, as protest against the Sharia law intensifies, members of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria are expected to travel to Gusau to have an audience with the governor.

Although some individual members of the 65-member body have openly condemned it, the body has refrained from commenting on it, until its planned meeting.

The Catholic bishops are likely to canvass a suspension of the Islamic legal system to avoid "unwholesome" religious crisis, according to one of its members.

In the same vein, the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) is expected to take a stronger position on the matter after its General Assembly meeting in Benin, the Edo State capital, which will hold on Wednesday and Thursday. An in-house committee has been raised to articulate CAN's position. Among the options the association may take it is to challenge the Zamfara state government in court, seeking to nullify the Sharia.

====xxx

Thursday, 28 October 1999

stampede at Zamfara's Sharia launch

>From Bayo Ohu,

Gusau

NEARLY 20 persons, including the under-aged and aged ones, were yesterday trampled on by the restless crowd that massed at the Ali Akilu Square, Gusau, for the official launching of Sharia law in Zamfara State.

Thousands of moslems in the state and from neighbouring Katsina, Kano, Gombe, Kebbi, Sokoto and Kaduna states thronged the venue where various Islamic groups had also taken position from as early as 6 a.m. to await the ceremony.

The security provided by hundreds of policemen, other security operatives and members of the civil defence corps could not contain the surging crowd that nearly overran Zamfara State Governor Ahmed Sani Yerima and other dignitaries present, including Emir of Gurmi, Alhaji Aliu Isa Gumi.

The entire Zaria road - from the "Gidan Sambo" roundabout to Gusau Hotels and stretching to Kaura Namoda Road - was overtaken by the crowd forcing their way into the Ali Akilu Square, which was then already overfilled.

The stampede to enter the venue and obviously to get a good view of the governor, broke down the security wall around him as his personal guards could not keep the throng at bay.

Even the barriers erected to keep the crowd from the podium where the governor and other dignitaries, including former presidential hopeful Alhaji Umaru Shinkafi, were sitting, soon gave way to the surging crowd who chanted "Al-Akbar" and other Islamic songs.

Persons who fainted and collapsed were quickly taken to the General Hospital where they were attended to. A particular boy in an obviously critical situation, was spitting blood, as an ambulance brought in some other five people at about 10.38 a.m.

Yet, thousands of adherents who could not find their way into the square, milled outside, taking over the entire Zaria Road roundabout stretching to Kaura Namoda Road. Most people were clutching radio sets to listen to the programme, which was being transmitted live on Zamfara Radio and the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), Sokoto.

Scores of other people were making brisk business at the venue of the launching by selling Koran and other Islamic literatures.

The launching was witnessed by thousands of Moslems who had arrived Gusau on foot from the neighbouring states of Kano, Kebbi, Sokoto, Katsina and Kaduna.

The Guardian gathered that apart from those who arrived in the state capital early yesterday morning, others who also trekked from Jibia (Katsina State), Zaria, Kaduna, Kano, Birnin-Kebbi, Gombe and other towns and villages arrived about four days before the launching.

Also, several other people and Islamic associations from within

and outside the state, had arrived in trucks, lorries and buses while others rode into the town on donkeys, camels and horses.

Ali Akilu Square, venue of the launching, had also been host to many visiting Moslems who literally took over the arena and turned it into a resting place.

Several others were sighted at the open space by the gate of the Government House and mosques where they had gathered to sleep.

Zamfara State Government on its part made adequate preparations and arrangement to ensure a successful launching and take off of the Sharia law. About 21 Toyota Carina cars and 10 luxury buses have been procured to run intra-city public transportation.

But the vehicles are only to carry women. They all carry the inscriptions "Mata Kawai" - females only.

However, there was acute accommodation problem for guests as all the major hotels and guest inns, including the only five-star hotel - the Gusau Hotel, in the town, could not accommodate invited persons for the event.

About 20 journalists who came from neighbouring state capitals to cover the event could not secure accommodation until the governor directed that a government guest house be given to them.

Speakers at the launching commended Yerima for his courage in introducing the Sharia despite mounting criticisms from non-moslems and other organisations across the country.

Justifying the adoption of the legal system, those who spoke to The Guardian said Sharia is a way of life which every good moslem must accept.

Alhaji Usman Dangogo Bungudu, chairman of the Review Committee on Islamic Law, said nothing and nobody can stop the implementation of the Sharia in the state, adding that non-moslems would not in anyway be affected by the new legal system.

He also allayed the fears of non-indigenes and non-moslems, stressing that they would not be forced to appear before Sharia courts.

The Sharia, he stressed would not apply to non-moslems, "even if a non-moslem fornicates with a moslem girl, the non-moslem would

not be punished but the girl who is a moslem."

Govt declines comments

OFFICIAL comments were not forthcoming yesterday on the introduction of Sharia law by Zamfara State.

Justice Minister Kanu Agabi whose reaction was sought by reporters said government was "not yet ready" to comment on the issue. He declined further comments.

Also, the Aviation Minister, Dr. Olusegun Agagu, said it was "too early to comment on the issue", arguing that since the Sharia issue was still emerging in some states it was premature for government to make any statement on it.

Agagu who was the spokesman of yesterday's Federal Executive Council meeting however, disclosed that though the matter was not on the agenda of the meeting, the Federal Government was watching the development with keen interest.

Maccido, other moslem leaders stay away

>From Bayo Ohu,

Katsina

PROMINENT moslem leaders, among them Sultan of Sokoto Alhaji Muhammadu Maccido who is the Nigerian Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs (NSCIA) President-General and the council's Secretary-General Dr Lateef Adegbite, were absent at yesterday's launching of Sharia law in Zamfara State.

Also absent were governors of the 19 northern states, most of whom are moslems. Particularly conspicuous in their absence were governors of the neighbouring states of Katsina, Kaduna, Kebbi and Sokoto.

None of the first class emirs, including Alhaji Ado Bayero - of Kano, Alhaji Shehu Idris (Zaria), Alhaji Mohammed Kabir Usman (Katsina), Alhaji Muhammadu Bashar (Daura), Alhaji Mustafa Jokolo (Gwandu), was also on hand at the launching.

But Zamfara State Governor Ahmed Sani Yarima who is the prime

mover of the Sharia law implementation, said he was overwhelmed as he rose up to the podium at about 10.11 a.m. to declare the Islamic legal system operational.

Addressing a crowded press conference shortly after the launching, he criticised the moslem Ummah whom he accused of being dormant for too long. The Ummah's inaction and slumber, he argued, gave the impression that moslems are a silent majority.

Yarima said: "With all the human and material resources with which Allah has blessed us, it is very unfortunate that we had been in this disheartening situation to the detriment of the religion of Islam.

"It has, therefore, become pertinent that we wake up from this sorry state of slumber and live up to our responsibility to the almighty in order to avoid His curse."

According to him, moslems have for long yearned for the freedom to exercise their full rights since the period they were invaded and colonised by the British.

He noted that they only partly achieved victory with independence, "but the neglect of planning still robbed us the fruit of our struggles."

Justifying the adoption of the Islamic legal system, he explained that moslems consider it to be the embodiment of the will of God. Besides, Islamic laws are essentially preventive, and not based on harsh punishment except as a last resort.

Yarima, however, regretted that the desire of moslems to have the law applied so as to reassert their religious values and identity have been allegedly taken out of proportion by a section of the media.

Noting that all the evil deeds and atrocities being committed by many people, including armed robbery, theft, corruption, homicide, drunkenness and other social ills are direct consequences of alcoholism, prostitution, gambling and drug abuse, he said all these are basically what the Sharia was meant to address.

Yarima said: "Let me make it unequivocally clear that we are not unaware of the multifarious nature of our society as a multi-religious and multi-ethnic one and we do not intend to

impose the Sharia law on the non-moslems in the state as is being deliberately and mischievously falsified by agents of blackmail."

Explaining that "we do not also harbour any ulterior motive against any group of people than our overwhelming majority moslem citizens of the state," the governor said the fears and apprehension over the Sharia issue are without basis.

Arguing that there is no competition in religion, he said the state government would not force non-moslems to embrace Islam.

"Besides, Shariah law is a tolerant, just and equitable system meant to deter people against committing offences which are repugnant to even the natural common law," he stressed.

Clarifying the operations of Sharia courts, Yarima said non-moslems would be at liberty to have their cases adjudicated at the conventional courts and that they will not be forced to go to the Sharia courts.

Yarima said his administration will not abdicate its responsibility of protecting the rights of all residents of the state irrespective of their religious beliefs. He assured that nobody will be discriminated against on the basis of his tribe or geo-political origin.

His government, he stressed, shall continue to welcome anyone who is planning to settle and transact business and contribute to the development of the state.

"But let me say here that our decision on Sharia is irreversible and non-negotiable and no amount of deceit, falsehood, intimidation or kangaroo judgments will deter or even bring us down," he said, adding that a movement bound to endure has started.

=====xxx

>>>> Dick Ackley

>>>>

>>>> Joy, fear as Nigerian state

>>>> introduces Islamic law

>>>>

>>>> October 27, 1999

>>>>> Web posted at: 8:33 AM EDT (1233 GMT)
>>>>>
>>>>> GUSAU, Nigeria (Reuters) -- A state in northern
>>> Nigeria
>>>>> introduced strict
>>>>> Islamic sharia law on Wednesday, stirring local
>>>>> jubilation
>>>>> but deep
>>>>> apprehension in other parts of the
multi-religious
>>> West
>>>>> African country.
>>>>>
>>>>> Zamfara was the first state in the half-Moslem
>> country
>>>>> of
>>>>> at least 108 million
>>>>> people to introduce sharia criminal law, which
> would
>>>>> allow
>>>>> amputations and
>>>>> beheadings once Saudi-trained courts are in
place
>> from
>>>>> January.
>>>>>
>>>>> Thousands of residents and well-wishers from
other
>>> parts
>>>>> of northern
>>>>> Nigeria cheered as Governor Ahmad Sani Yerima
>>> proclaimed
>>>>> the law in
>>>>> central Ali Akilu Square in the northwestern
city
> of
>>>>> Gusau.
>>>>>
>>>>> "Without sharia, Islamic faith is valueless,"
said
>>>>> Yerima,
>>>>> who appealed to
>>>>> other states in northern Nigeria to follow suit.
> At
>>>>> least
>>>>> four are considering

>>>> the move.
 >>>>
 >>>> Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, a
 born-again
 >>>> Christian, disregarded
 >>>> Yerima's invitation to the ceremony. Officials
 > said
 >> he
 >>>> was
 >>>>> preparing for a
 >>>>> visit to the United States.
 >>>>>
 >>>>> Sharia poses a problem for Obasanjo, who took
 > office
 >>>> in
 >>>>> May to end 15
 >>>>> years of military rule by the Moslems of
 northern
 >>>>> Nigeria.
 >>>>>
 >>>>> Aides privately say that while Obasanjo could
 not
 >>>>> personally approve of
 >>>>> installing sharia, it is politically difficult
 to
 >>>>> challenge since he is already
 >>>>> accused of siding with Christians from southern
 >>> Nigeria
 >>>>> when making key
 >>>>> appointments.
 >>>>>
 >>>>> Zamfara's authorities promise sharia will apply
 > only
 >>>> to
 >>>>> Moslems and in any
 >>>>> dispute between a Moslem and a Christian it is
 the
 >>>>> Christian who would
 >>>>> decide where the case is judged.
 >>>>>
 >>>>> But the few non-Moslems living in Gusau are
 > worried
 >>>>> about
 >>>>> the possibility of
 >>>>> growing intolerance after a ban on the sale of
 >>> alcohol.

>>>> They are concerned
 >>>> by Yerima's public promise that only those with
 >> beards
 >>>> will be able to win
 >>>> state government contracts.
 >>>>
 >>>> Zamfara has bought 11 special buses which only
 > women
 >>>> will
 >>>> be allowed to
 >>>> use, to keep them separate from men.
 >>>>
 >>>> "How can they tell us sharia will not affect
 us?"
 >>> asked
 >>>> businessman Chibuzor
 >>>> Nwankwo, complaining over the closure of hotels
 > and
 >>>> bars.
 >>>> "I think the best
 >>>> thing is for the government to put a stop to
 this
 >>> before
 >>>> we have more
 >>>> trouble."
 >>>>
 >>>> Thousands have died in outbreaks of rioting
 > between
 >>>> Moslems and
 >>>> Christians and between different Moslem sects in
 >>>> northern
 >>>> Nigeria since the
 >>>> departure in 1960 of British colonialists who
 >> created
 >>>> the
 >>>> diverse state in the
 >>>> early years of the century.
 >>>>
 >>>> Riots between northerners and immigrant
 Christian
 >> Ibos
 >>>> in
 >>>> 1966 helped
 >>>> trigger civil war in which up to one million
 died
 >>> after

>>>> Nigeria's southeast tried
 >>>> to secede.
 >>>>
 >>>> More recently, dozens were killed in the
 northern
 >> city
 >>>> of
 >>>> Kano during rioting
 >>>> in July between local Hausas and Yorubas from
 >>> Obasanjo's
 >>>> southwestern
 >>>> Yoruba tribe.
 >>>>
 >>>>
 >>>>
 >>>>
 >>>
 >>>
 >>>
 >>
 >
 >

=====
 =====xxx

-----Original Message-----

From: Mobolaji E. Aluko On Behalf Of Mobolaji E. Aluko

Sent: Wednesday, October 27, 1999 8:29 AM

To: News Only Group; NAIJANEW@INTERNET {naijanews@esosoft.com}

Subject: STAR INFORMATION: In Which We are Reminded that Assertive
 Zamfara's Sharia Law

 Vanguard: Lead Story
 Zamfara adopts Sharia today
 By Our Reporters

AS the implementation of the civil and criminal aspects of Sharia begins today in the northwestern State of Zamfara, the first in the country, its governor, Alhaji Ahmed Sani Yarima declared last night that only the people of the state could reverse government's decision on the issue.

But the state chapter of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) said the country might be sliding into anarchy should the state be allowed to operate Sharia.

Gov. Yarima who, three weeks ago, announced the introduction of Sharia in the state with effect from today said on BBC last night that it was a waste of time for any one from outside the state to attempt to stop the introduction of Sharia.

He was responding to a question on legal moves in a Lagos court to stop Sharia in his state.

The interview:

"Why has Zamfara State gone ahead with Sharia Law despite protests?

"Well, as far as I'm concerned, I'm not aware of that case because I only heard it as you are just telling me now.

"I heard it two days ago. People are rumouring that there was a court case in Lagos. However, even if there is a court case, as far as we are concerned, we have courts in Zamfara State and the people of Zamfara State are the people who are going to be affected by this law. Therefore, it is only the people of Zamfara State that can take the government to court.

"In fact, everybody in this state has accepted it. Therefore, it is the right and duty of those people if they want to show any rejection or disaffection to go to court and not for anybody in Lagos to go to court thinking that he can prevent the people of Zamfara State from exercising their constitutional rights.

Is it true that already the law has recorded its first victim by way of amputating the arm of a Fulani man?

"Not at all. It is only evildoers who go about rumour-mongering trying to cause disaffection between people. When we asked them to show us the person, they say the person is dead, and they cannot even show the grave or where the man is buried.

You swore to abide by the constitution. In the event that there is conflict between the Sharia and the constitution, what is going to happen?

There will never be a conflict between this law that we've established and the constitution because we have been able to study the constitution very well and take into consideration every loophole that is likely to come up because one of the fundamental provision in the constitution is the freedom of religion, and we are trying as best as possible to ensure that we practise our religion one hundred per cent without any hindrance. The constitution has guaranteed the right to freedom of religion."

The governor in announcing the introduction of the new law three weeks ago said the State Assembly had already passed a bill to give it legal backing.

He has signed it into law.

He explained that he made adoption of Sharia Law a major campaign issue

during election campaign. He also added that the State Assembly debated the matter and passed a bill on it because the electorate wanted it.

Giving details of how Sharia would work in the state, Gov. Yarima said hands of robbers and thieves would be cut, if arrested; adulterers would be stoned to death and minor offenders like liars would be publicly flogged.

He went further to disclose that about 4,000 members of the Aid-Group (a voluntary organisation) had been drafted to act as policemen to enforce Sharia.

Before now, Sharia had been operational in some parts of the North for over one century. Under it, only civil aspects were applied. And these were binding only on Muslims who chose to go to Sharia courts. In other words, Sharia Court was and is still voluntary, even for Muslims.

The adoption of the criminal aspect of Sharia by Zamfara State now presupposes that all Muslims are compulsorily subjected to Sharia Court especially when the state has been proclaimed an Islamic state.

Following the example of Zamfara State, some other Northern states like Sokoto, Kano, Katsina, Gombe and Niger among others have indicated intention to follow suit. The Aid-Groups of those states will also have to be converted to police force, if Sharia must be effective.

Christian citizens and residents of Zamfara State have opposed the adoption of Sharia citing the provisions of the constitution and expressing fears for their own safety.

Some prominent Muslims too, including Sheikh Ibrahim El-Zakzaky have either called for caution in adopting Sharia fully or opposed it on the grounds that it contravenes the 1999 Constitution. Even in states that have overwhelming Muslim majority, very few people understand the workings and implications of Sharia. None of those states is known to have educated the citizens enough on the law.

In countries where Sharia is applied, the state has responsibilities to provide an enabling environment such that citizens are not subjected to any temptation which can make them easily liable to capital punishment.

For instance, in Saudi Arabia, the necessities of life: food, shelter and clothing are abundantly provided. Education is free from the elementary school to the university. There is marriage subsidy for men of marriage age. There are jobs for all qualified people and there are available and highly subsidised accommodations for new couples.

Social amenities like water, electricity, telephone, fire-fighting service, excellent roads as well as regular and comfortable transportation system are all provided. With these, people who are not qualified for official jobs can employ themselves.

So far, these conditions are not known to be available in any northern state.

But by far more fundamental in the adoption of Sharia in full and the proclamation of Islamic State by Zamfara is the issue of constitution.

Is there any constitutional provision for such an action? Can a voluntary organisation like Aid- Group be constitutionally converted to a police force?

Can a State Assembly validly legislate outside the country's constitution?

These, and many other questions remain to be answered while the controversy on Sharia rages on.

In the meantime, the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) Zamfara State Chapter said in a petition to the President, "... the passing of a bill on Sharia by the Zamfara State House of Assembly on Thursday, 7th October 1999 and the unfolding events since the proclamation by the governor in the last three months, we now know for a fact that it is not just a legal system that is being introduced but an ill-motivated ploy to Islamise Zamfara State ..."

CAN alleged in the memo that the existence of the nation as a unified entity cannot be guaranteed if the President allows the present "religious zealotry" being exhibited by the Governor, Ahmed Sani to continue, adding that it could lead to "social, political and economic disarray and chaos," as was enacted in Lebanon, Sudan and Northern Ireland.

CAN further stated that it would remain "permanently opposed" to the imposition of Islam in Zamfara State, stressing that "Nigerians must enjoy the right to freedom of worship, to acquire property anywhere in the country, association and peaceful assembly and freedom from discrimination in any part of Nigeria."

CAN further lamented that even before the thought of full implementation of the Sharia by Gov. Ahmed Sani, several constitutional rights have been denied the non-Muslim population which according to them is well over the one per cent attributed to it by the governor as such what is the guarantee that some of these rights would return with Sharia, they questioned?

"In further contravention of the provisions of sections 10, 42, 38, 197 and 227 of the 1999 Constitution, Gov. Ahmed Sani did not appoint a single Christian into the Zamfara State Executive Council notwithstanding that there are qualified indigenous Christians fit for such jobs.

"He has been using the instrument of the state media to propagate Islam at the detriment of Christianity and have imposed Islamic Knowledge as a compulsory subject on pupils and students in educational institutions irrespective of their faith while Christian Knowledge is disallowed."

Preparatory to the full take-off of an enhanced Sharia Court system in January 2000, CAN alleged that Gov. Sani has altered the former administrative structure of the courts by the creation of "Islamic Courts" and as a result enlarged the jurisdiction of the Sharia Court of Appeal.

CAN observed in the statement that the "demolition of the Methodist Church Gusau Parish, Evangelical Fellowship of Nigeria and the marking of several churches for future demolition," the arrest, trial and conviction of about 20 Christians by the Gusau Local Government Area under the Sharia Law are moves aimed at "humiliating Christians" in their fatherland.

According to the petition signed by CAN Chairman in the state, Peter Dambo, "it is the position of CAN that the repeated unguided statements of the state governor that he is prepared to die or be removed from office in the cause of Islamising the state suggests that he already knows that he is embarking on an unconstitutional venture that will bring him at head-on collision with the

federal and other interested international authorities.

It concluded "we urge you to devise and enforce effective measures within your constitutional powers to arrest and avert the clear and present danger of an actual breakdown of public order and safety in Zamfara and indeed the federation over the issue of Sharia which clearly constitutes a threat to the existence of the federation."

Meanwhile, several committees have been set up to ensure the success of the international launching of Zamfara State into the Sharia world.

The Ali Akilu Square, where the ceremony is expected to take place has been connected to the national grid while stands are being erected for Islamic side-attractions during the fiesta.

Vanguard Transmitted Wednesday, 27 October, 1999

 Aluko Commentary

While our entire country appeared formerly to be bamboozled by threats of ethnic disintegration, religious schisms have snuck in through the backdoor, blind-siding everybody except the most perspicacious. Some of us are on record as saying that the real frontier for strife in Nigeria has always been religious, not ethnic.

The introduction of Sharia Law in Zamfara, and its contagion in outlying Northern states, is not a constitutional crisis - it is a constitutional cataclysm, because religious matters have a way of militating against compromise, compromise which is often confused with apostasy. From the pieces of this cataclysm will emerge either a stronger CONFEDERATE Nigeria * because this Sharia Law is definitely unconstitutional in a Federal Nigeria - or a piece-wise Nigeria that we won't recognize.

The case for a Sovereign National Conference can no more be better made. It is also unfortunate that fears of religious strife in Nigeria, strifes which WILL definitely gain momentum, will affect foreign investment in Nigeria, and certainly in those parts where Sharia Law is implemented. The ensuing widening of the economic, educational and religious gap does not augur well for our country.
 Stay tuned.

 =====xxx

Joy, fear as Nigerian state introduces Islamic law

09:17 a.m. Oct 27, 1999 Eastern
By Mohammed Rufai

GUSAU, Nigeria, Oct 27 (Reuters) - A state in northern Nigeria introduced strict Islamic sharia law on Wednesday, stirring local jubilation but deep apprehension in other parts of the multi-religious West African country.

Zamfara was the first state in the half-Moslem country of at least 108 million people to introduce sharia criminal law, which would allow amputations and beheadings once Saudi-trained courts are in place from January.

Thousands of residents and well-wishers from other parts of northern Nigeria cheered as Governor Ahmad Sani Yerima proclaimed the law in central Ali Akilu Square in the northwestern city of Gusau.

``Without sharia, Islamic faith is valueless," said Yerima, who appealed to other states in northern Nigeria to follow suit. At least four are considering the move.

Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, a born-again Christian, disregarded Yerima's invitation to the ceremony. Officials said he was preparing for a visit to the United States.

Sharia poses a problem for Obasanjo, who took office in May to end 15 years of military rule by the Moslems of northern Nigeria.

Aides privately say that while Obasanjo could not personally approve of installing sharia, it is politically difficult to challenge since he is already accused of siding with Christians from southern Nigeria when making key appointments.

LAW ONLY FOR MOSLEMS

Zamfara's authorities promise sharia will apply only to Moslems and in any dispute between a Moslem and a Christian it is the Christian who would decide where the case is judged.

But the few non-Moslems living in Gusau are worried about the possibility of growing intolerance after a ban on the sale of alcohol. They are concerned by Yerima's public promise that only those with beards will be able to win state government contracts.

Zamfara has bought 11 special buses which only women will be allowed to use, to keep them separate from men.

``How can they tell us sharia will not affect us?" asked businessman Chibuzor Nwankwo, complaining over the closure of hotels and bars. ``I think the best thing is for the government to put a stop to this before we have more trouble."

Thousands have died in outbreaks of rioting between Moslems and Christians and between different Moslem sects in northern Nigeria since the departure in 1960 of British colonialists who created the diverse state in the early years of the century.

Riots between northerners and immigrant Christian Ibos in 1966 helped trigger civil war in which up to one million died after Nigeria's southeast tried to secede.

More recently, dozens were killed in the northern city of Kano during rioting in July between local Hausas and Yorubas from Obasanjo's southwestern Yoruba tribe.

=====
=====xxx

Dad, here is another article on this issue. You have an interesting perspective on it. You should really write up an op-ed type piece on this from the perspective of a long time missionary in Nigeria, and I could send it on to some of my newspaper buddies in Nigeria who would probably love to print it...

Wiebe

----- Original Message -----

From: Dick Ackley <ack@flash.net>

To: 'Ackley's list' <ack@flash.net>

Sent: Wednesday, October 27, 1999 12:13 PM

Subject: Nigeria

- > I got the following news about Nigeria off of the web this morning. You may
- > of already heard this, but here is some more detail.
- >
- > Dick Ackley
- >
- > Joy, fear as Nigerian state

- > introduces Islamic law
- >
- > October 27, 1999
- > Web posted at: 8:33 AM EDT (1233 GMT)
- >
- > GUSAU, Nigeria (Reuters) -- A state in northern Nigeria
- > introduced strict
- > Islamic sharia law on Wednesday, stirring local jubilation
- > but deep
- > apprehension in other parts of the multi-religious West
- > African country.
- >
- > Zamfara was the first state in the half-Moslem country of
- > at least 108 million
- > people to introduce sharia criminal law, which would allow
- > amputations and
- > beheadings once Saudi-trained courts are in place from
- > January.
- >
- > Thousands of residents and well-wishers from other parts
- > of northern
- > Nigeria cheered as Governor Ahmad Sani Yerima proclaimed
- > the law in
- > central Ali Akilu Square in the northwestern city of
- > Gusau.
- >
- > "Without sharia, Islamic faith is valueless," said Yerima,
- > who appealed to
- > other states in northern Nigeria to follow suit. At least
- > four are considering
- > the move.
- >
- > Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, a born-again
- > Christian, disregarded
- > Yerima's invitation to the ceremony. Officials said he was
- > preparing for a
- > visit to the United States.
- >
- > Sharia poses a problem for Obasanjo, who took office in
- > May to end 15

- > years of military rule by the Moslems of northern Nigeria.
- >
- > Aides privately say that while Obasanjo could not
- > personally approve of
- > installing sharia, it is politically difficult to
- > challenge since he is already
- > accused of siding with Christians from southern Nigeria
- > when making key
- > appointments.
- >
- > Zamfara's authorities promise sharia will apply only to
- > Moslems and in any
- > dispute between a Moslem and a Christian it is the
- > Christian who would
- > decide where the case is judged.
- >
- > But the few non-Moslems living in Gusau are worried
- about
- > the possibility of
- > growing intolerance after a ban on the sale of alcohol.
- > They are concerned
- > by Yerima's public promise that only those with beards
- > will be able to win
- > state government contracts.
- >
- > Zamfara has bought 11 special buses which only women
- will
- > be allowed to
- > use, to keep them separate from men.
- >
- > "How can they tell us sharia will not affect us?" asked
- > businessman Chibuzor
- > Nwankwo, complaining over the closure of hotels and
- bars.
- > "I think the best
- > thing is for the government to put a stop to this before
- > we have more
- > trouble."
- >
- > Thousands have died in outbreaks of rioting between
- > Moslems and
- > Christians and between different Moslem sects in
- northern
- > Nigeria since the
- > departure in 1960 of British colonialists who created

the

- > diverse state in the
- > early years of the century.
- >
- > Riots between northerners and immigrant Christian Ibos
- in
- > 1966 helped
- > trigger civil war in which up to one million died after
- > Nigeria's southeast tried
- > to secede.
- >
- > More recently, dozens were killed in the northern city
- of
- > Kano during rioting
- > in July between local Hausas and Yorubas from Obasanjo's
- > southwestern
- > Yoruba tribe.
- >

=====
=====xxx

-----Original Message-----

From: Mobolaji E. Aluko On Behalf Of Mobolaji E. Aluko

Sent: Wednesday, October 27, 1999 8:29 AM

To: News Only Group; NAIJANEW@INTERNET {naijanews@esosoft.com}

Subject: STAR INFORMATION: In Which We are Reminded that Assertive
Zamfara's Sharia Law

Vanguard: Lead Story
Zamfara adopts Sharia today
By Our Reporters

AS the implementation of the civil and criminal aspects of Sharia begins today in the northwestern State of Zamfara, the first in the country, its governor, Alhaji Ahmed Sani Yarima declared last night that only the people of the state could reverse government's decision on the issue.

But the state chapter of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) said the country might be sliding into anarchy should the state be allowed to operate Sharia.

Gov. Yarima who, three weeks ago, announced the introduction of Sharia in the state with effect from today said on BBC last night that it was a waste of time for any one from outside the state to attempt to stop the introduction of Sharia.

He was responding to a question on legal moves in a Lagos court to stop Sharia in his state.

The interview:

"Why has Zamfara State gone ahead with Sharia Law despite protests?

"Well, as far as I'm concerned, I'm not aware of that case because I only heard it as you are just telling me now.

"I heard it two days ago. People are rumouring that there was a court case in Lagos. However, even if there is a court case, as far as we are concerned, we have courts in Zamfara State and the people of Zamfara State are the people who are going to be affected by this law. Therefore, it is only the people of Zamfara State that can take the government to court.

"In fact, everybody in this state has accepted it. Therefore, it is the right and duty of those people if they want to show any rejection or disaffection to go to court and not for anybody in Lagos to go to court thinking that he can prevent the people of Zamfara State from exercising their constitutional rights.

Is it true that already the law has recorded its first victim by way of amputating the arm of a Fulani man?

"Not at all. It is only evildoers who go about rumour-mongering trying to cause disaffection between people. When we asked them to show us the person, they say the person is dead, and they cannot even show the grave or where the man is buried.

You swore to abide by the constitution. In the event that there is conflict between the Sharia and the constitution, what is going to happen?

There will never be a conflict between this law that we've established and the constitution because we have been able to study the constitution very well and take into consideration every loophole that is likely to come up because one of the fundamental provision in the constitution is the freedom of religion, and we are trying as best as possible to ensure that we practise our religion one hundred per cent without any hindrance. The constitution has guaranteed the right to freedom of religion."

The governor in announcing the introduction of the new law three weeks ago said the State Assembly had already passed a bill to give it legal backing.

He has signed it into law.

He explained that he made adoption of Sharia Law a major campaign issue during election campaign. He also added that the State Assembly debated the matter and passed a bill on it because the electorate wanted it.

Giving details of how Sharia would work in the state, Gov. Yarima said hands of robbers and thieves would be cut, if arrested; adulterers would be stoned to death and minor offenders like liars would be publicly flogged.

He went further to disclose that about 4,000 members of the Aid-Group (a voluntary organisation) had been drafted to act as policemen to enforce Sharia.

Before now, Sharia had been operational in some parts of the North for over one century. Under it, only civil aspects were applied. And these were binding only on Muslims who chose to go to Sharia courts. In other words,

Sharia Court was and is still voluntary, even for Muslims.

The adoption of the criminal aspect of Sharia by Zamfara State now presupposes that all Muslims are compulsorily subjected to Sharia Court especially when the state has been proclaimed an Islamic state.

Following the example of Zamfara State, some other Northern states like Sokoto, Kano, Katsina, Gombe and Niger among others have indicated intention to follow suit. The Aid-Groups of those states will also have to be converted to police force, if Sharia must be effective.

Christian citizens and residents of Zamfara State have opposed the adoption of Sharia citing the provisions of the constitution and expressing fears for their own safety.

Some prominent Muslims too, including Sheikh Ibrahim El-Zakzaky have either called for caution in adopting Sharia fully or opposed it on the grounds that it contravenes the 1999 Constitution. Even in states that have overwhelming Muslim majority, very few people understand the workings and implications of Sharia. None of those states is known to have educated the citizens enough on the law.

In countries where Sharia is applied, the state has responsibilities to provide an enabling environment such that citizens are not subjected to any temptation which can make them easily liable to capital punishment.

For instance, in Saudi Arabia, the necessities of life: food, shelter and clothing are abundantly provided. Education is free from the elementary school to the university. There is marriage subsidy for men of marriage age. There are jobs for all qualified people and there are available and highly subsidised accommodations for new couples.

Social amenities like water, electricity, telephone, fire-fighting service, excellent roads as well as regular and comfortable transportation system are all provided. With these, people who are not qualified for official jobs can employ themselves.

So far, these conditions are not known to be available in any northern state.

But by far more fundamental in the adoption of Sharia in full and the proclamation of Islamic State by Zamfara is the issue of constitution.

Is there any constitutional provision for such an action? Can a voluntary organisation like Aid- Group be constitutionally converted to a police force?

Can a State Assembly validly legislate outside the country's constitution?

These, and many other questions remain to be answered while the controversy on Sharia rages on.

In the meantime, the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) Zamfara State Chapter said in a petition to the President, "... the passing of a bill on Sharia by the Zamfara State House of Assembly on Thursday, 7th October 1999 and the unfolding events since the proclamation by the governor in the last three months, we now know for a fact that it is not just a legal system that is being introduced but an ill-motivated ploy to Islamise Zamfara State ..." CAN alleged in the memo that the existence of the nation as a unified entity cannot be guaranteed if the President allows the present "religious zealotry" being exhibited by the Governor, Ahmed Sani to continue, adding that it could

lead to "social, political and economic disarray and chaos," as was enacted in Lebanon, Sudan and Northern Ireland.

CAN further stated that it would remain "permanently opposed" to the imposition of Islam in Zamfara State, stressing that "Nigerians must enjoy the right to freedom of worship, to acquire property anywhere in the country, association and peaceful assembly and freedom from discrimination in any part of Nigeria."

CAN further lamented that even before the thought of full implementation of the Sharia by Gov. Ahmed Sani, several constitutional rights have been denied the non-Muslim population which according to them is well over the one per cent attributed to it by the governor as such what is the guarantee that some of these rights would return with Sharia, they questioned?

"In further contravention of the provisions of sections 10, 42, 38, 197 and 227 of the 1999 Constitution, Gov. Ahmed Sani did not appoint a single Christian into the Zamfara State Executive Council notwithstanding that there are qualified indigenous Christians fit for such jobs.

"He has been using the instrument of the state media to propagate Islam at the detriment of Christianity and have imposed Islamic Knowledge as a compulsory subject on pupils and students in educational institutions irrespective of their faith while Christian Knowledge is disallowed."

Preparatory to the full take-off of an enhanced Sharia Court system in January 2000, CAN alleged that Gov. Sani has altered the former administrative structure of the courts by the creation of "Islamic Courts" and as a result enlarged the jurisdiction of the Sharia Court of Appeal.

CAN observed in the statement that the "demolition of the Methodist Church Gusau Parish, Evangelical Fellowship of Nigeria and the marking of several churches for future demolition," the arrest, trial and conviction of about 20 Christians by the Gusau Local Government Area under the Sharia Law are moves aimed at "humiliating Christians" in their fatherland.

According to the petition signed by CAN Chairman in the state, Peter Dambo, "it is the position of CAN that the repeated unguided statements of the state governor that he is prepared to die or be removed from office in the cause of Islamising the state suggests that he already knows that he is embarking on an unconstitutional venture that will bring him at head-on collision with the federal and other interested international authorities.

It concluded "we urge you to devise and enforce effective measures within your constitutional powers to arrest and avert the clear and present danger of an actual breakdown of public order and safety in Zamfara and indeed the federation over the issue of Sharia which clearly constitutes a threat to the existence of the federation."

Meanwhile, several committees have been set up to ensure the success of the international launching of Zamfara State into the Sharia world.

The Ali Akilu Square, where the ceremony is expected to take place has been connected to the national grid while stands are being erected for Islamic side-attractions during the fiesta.

northern zone president, the Rev. Peter Jatau, said on Friday in Kaduna that the Shar'ia was a clear violation of the 1999 constitution, which states that Nigeria is a secular nation.

=====xxx

Post Express

Date of Article: 10/20/99

Back-up

THE recent legislative consecration of Governor Ahmed Sani's plan to islamise Zamfara State, and the similar moves to that effect reportedly going on in Sokoto State have continued to raise anxiety and tensions all over the country. The Nigerian Human Rights Community had risen in stout condemnation of these moves, and had appropriately argued that the introduction of the Sharia law in any state of the Nigerian federation is a breach of the constitution and a fundamental threat to the secularism of this country. The position of the Human Rights Community in this matter is a principled and patriotic one and should be hearkened to by the state governments involved. Nigeria has a highly plural society, and this is reflected in the settlement of people in every state of the federation. Nigerian citizens of diverse religious beliefs are living together in every state. There is no how any state would introduce the Sharia law without impinging on the religious and total human rights of non-moslems living in it. Thus, the governor of Zamfara State and his House of Assembly should do well to reconsider their plan to islamise the state. Sokoto State is also advised not to pursue this islamization policy, and all states of the Nigerian federation are advised to remain faithful to this country's secularism. This is the only way we can preserve, sustain and invigorate our stability and national unity.

=====xxx

>Subject: Fw: OTI Web-Briefs -- Nigeria 10/25

>Date: Mon, 25 Oct 1999 22:12:34 -0700

South-western Islamic youth body to migrate to north

An Islamic youth organisation, NACOMYO, in the south-western city of Ibadan said on Wednesday it might mobilise its members to migrate en-masse to states where Shar'ia (Islamic law) may be introduced, the `Vanguard' newspaper reported. NACOMYO's president, Alhaji Kunle Sanni, said at a news conference that the organisation planned to start a nationwide demonstration in support of Zamfara State, which has been leading the recent drive to implement the Shar'ia.

Katsina sets up panel on Shar'ia and the constitution

A committee has been established by the Katsina State government to study the constitution as it affects the introduction of Islamic law, `The Guardian' newspaper reported on Friday. Governor Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, who inaugurated the committee on Thursday, said the need to review the constitution arose from public demands for the

adoption of Shar'ia in the state. Members of the committee, he said, included the state Grand Khadi, Alhaji Ahmad Batagarawa as chairman, Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice, Alhaji Ibrahim Shama; Justice Musa Danladi of the Katsina High Court, Director of the State Pilgrims Welfare Board, Alhaji Ishaq Nuhu Batagarawa and Alhaji Ahmed Mohammad Bawa Faskari. The chief registrar of the Shar'ia Court of Appeal, Alhaji Mohammed Abubakar, will serve as the committee's secretary.

Christian cleric ask for calm

Amidst the clamour and anxiety generated by the demand for the Shar'ia in several northern states, a Kaduna-based Christian cleric, the Rev. Elizabeth Obadaki, has appealed for calm, the 'Post Express' newspaper reported on Friday. She told reporters, as part of activities marking the fifth anniversary of the Chapel of Power in Kaduna on Tuesday, that if Christians in Zamfara and other states of the federation lived righteously, they would not be harmed.

=====xxx

NIGERIAN CHRISTIANS WARN AGAINST INCLUDING ISLAMIC LAW IN NEW CONSTITUTION

Nigeria is writing a new constitution and has planned its release for the end of April. However, in mid-April, the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) cautioned the government against including the Islamic shariah law in it. The president of CAN, Sunday Mbang, said that CAN, an umbrella organization for Nigeria's churches, had heard there was discussion but no consensus in the country's ruling council.

Because of the division of the population in large Christian and Muslim blocks, the 1979 constitution ruled out the adoption of any religion as a state religion. Mbang said that Christians were becoming more radical in their protests. He felt the government should not provoke resentment. CAN, he said, was asking the ruling council not to include "anything that shows bias for religion in the new constitution to be promulgated."

Mbang said he did not want his country turned into a Lebanon. "A country where religion and tribe do not determine what one gets in terms of position, appointment, election into offices and admission to schools; this should

be our dream and preoccupation now," he said.

The Northern Christian Elders Forum, meeting in Kaduna, echoed the sentiments of CAN. In a March meeting the group spoke out against those Muslims who are complaining about the election of Christian president.

They

stated clearly that Nigeria is a secular state and not a multi-religious one.

They, too, rejected any attempt to include shariah in the constitution. (Nigerian Guardian, Compass Direct)

MUSLIM BANDITS ATTACK CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

Muslim bandits killed 36 persons and caused almost US\$4 million in damage in an attack on the Christian community of Tangale, in Gombe, Northern Nigeria. In the March attack they burned 430 houses, stole more than

2000

head of cattle, and took an estimated \$1 million in cash.

The authorities believe the attacks came from neighboring countries,

either Chad or Niger. Tangale leaders say the raids have been occurring for

ten years. In early April more than 5000 Christian women and youth marched in

a

peaceful protest over government inaction on the attacks. (Compass Direct)

William K. Blickley

=====
 Subj: INTERESTING article
 Date: 99-04-10 13:30:52 EDT
 From: weeks-g@dircon.co.uk (Graham Weeks)
 To: BoerJanH@aol.com

This was on the Soc.Nigeria newsgroup and I thought it would interest you.
 =====

Secularism, Shari'ah And The Nigerian Constitution -- Or, A Case In Sample Of A 'Snake-Oil'

Salesmanship? (Adey Oyenuga , Thu 5:34 pm)

Resent-From:

Andy De_Silent <ac310@sfn.saskatoon.sk.ca>

Hello Netters,

The culled write up (below) is definitely an 'interesting' and revealing piece. You may want to print it out and/or save for a more leisured time.

Prince Adey.

=====

Secularism, Shari'ah and the Nigerian Constitution
By Dr Banu Az-Zubair

Recurrent dissatisfaction with the politics and economics of a nation by its citizenry, the subsequent debates it ushers in and the demand for improvements or alternative set-ups are the hallmark of most democracies. Such perturbations as are going on in Nigeria, in my view, represent a robust manifestation of an evolving democracy; committed citizens trying to fulfil a fundamental responsibility of their citizenship. The principles, that should guide all concerned in pursuing that noble goal is fairness, due consideration and love of peace. It is with these principles in mind that I address the issues of secularism, Shari'ah and the Nigerian Constitution. In so doing, I seek peace - a permanent peace to enable our beloved country (Nigeria) to forge ahead with all its potential and compete equally with other nations. It is my view that peace can only be achieved when there is an acceptable, fair, stable and responsible government.

The single most important factor that would engender the general stability of the country now, and in the future, is the type of state or government Nigeria operates. Our founding fathers bequeathed to us Federalism. I believe the choice of a federal system of government was based on fairness, due consideration and immense sense of duty and responsibility. But why did our founding fathers choose federalism? What is the link between the state and secularism? What about the Shari'ah? What does it mean and what is its relevance to Muslims? How would the existence of Shari'ah affect non-Muslims in Nigeria? These and other questions would be addressed in this piece.

There are several types of government with different methods and systems of governance (democratic, liberal, totalitarian etc.). These political ideologies are derived historically from the experience and consciousness of

the Graeco-Roman traditions, which subsequently greatly influenced the Judeo-Christian traditions. Thus these concepts are of concern to us because they represent Western Culture and Civilization and/or Judeo-Christian traditions.

As is well known, the Nigerian society consists of two predominant religious groups, Muslims and Christians. Understanding both the history and culture of these groups and incorporating their heritage into the political structure is essential to forming any permanently stable government.

Nigerians are deeply religious people and our religious belief is a fundamental part of our individual and collective identity. The question then must be asked, what role, if any, does religion play in our political beliefs? Is there a necessary connection between religion and our political life? Islam, like Judaism and Christianity, believes in the divine origin of government. It follows, therefore, that political science for Islam, as it should be for Christianity and Judaism, is not an independent discipline aspiring to the utmost heights of intellectual speculation. Rather, it is a branch of theology, which does not distinction between secular and spiritual characteristics. The conception of law in Islam is, therefore, radically different from the Graeco-Roman traditions. Although this should also be the case for Judaism and Christianity, both Christianity and Judaism have, however, undergone some radical transformations since their inception, through a process of secularisation.

Secularisation and secularism are derived concepts from secular. It is perhaps important to give a brief overview of the origins secularism in order to appreciate what its proper meaning, literally, conceptually, and practically. The word 'secular' is derived from the Latin word 'saeculum', which denotes 'this age' or 'the present time' or 'contemporary events'. With its emphasis on the affirmation of anything mundane and world, saeculum is therefore a negation of anything with spiritual essence. It is the preservation of vanity and destruction of virtue - the opposite of sanctity. Being worldly, it, also conveys a meaning with a marked dual connotation of time and location. Thus the concept secular refers to the condition of the world at this particular time, period, or age. It is this spatio-temporal connotation conveyed in the concept of secularism that has forever changed Christianity.

Secularisation gained even more prominence during the European Enlightenment, from the 17th to the 19th Centuries, and with the concomitant rise of reason and empiricism and scientific and technological advances in the West, the stage, it seemed, was set for confrontation between modernist thought and

Christianity. In fact, some Christian theologians already foresaw the coming of such a crisis, and sensing the trend of contemporary events they began to accept the inevitability of the impending religious and theological crisis that would emerge consequently. However, being already influenced by secularism, they counselled alignment and participation in the process of secularisation, which is seen by many as irresistibly spreading rapidly throughout the World like a raging fire. This marked the beginning of the transmutation of values, dubbed the rise of science and the overthrow of religion.

There are some Christian theologians and intellectuals who are not only preparing the ground for a new secularised version of Christianity but they also accept that the very ground itself will be ever-shifting and that the new version itself will ultimately be replaced by another as future social changes would demand. They visualise the contemporary experience of secularisation as part of the evolutionary process of human history and as part of the inevitable process of socio-political change.

These Christians theologians and laity align themselves with the forces of modernist thought so far as to assert, triumphantly, in their desire to keep in line with contemporary events in the West, that secularisation has its roots in Biblical faith and is the fruit of the Gospel and, therefore, rather than oppose the secularising process, Christianity must realistically welcome it as a process congenial to its true nature and purpose.

The tolerance, by the Church, of homosexuality and homosexual marriages for laity as well as priests, the ordination of women priests are examples of the sort of conviviality sought between modernist and traditional Christianity. Perhaps, Nigerian Christians (Theologians and laity) do not see themselves as participants in this trend, but they and other Christians who, on the whole, probably, are opposed to secularisation, are themselves unconsciously assiduous accomplices in that very process, to the extent that those aware of the dilemma confronting them still profess secularism. It was recently reported the Northern zone of Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), headed by Kaduna Archbishop Peter Jatau, said:

"Secular law must remain the basis of the constitution; Christians will resist at whatever price the imposition of and introduction of any religion's law, such as Shari'ah law, into our secular constitution."

The statement further added that:

They want to "pray for the peace of our fatherland where all should be free to practice our faith or religion according to our conscience and conviction."

Indeed, many Christian theologians and intellectuals forming the avant-garde of the Church are in fact already deeply involved in what is called 'immanent apostasy', for while firmly resolving to remain Christians at all cost, they openly profess and advocate a secularised version of it, thus ushering into the Christian fold a new emergent Christianity alien to the traditional version, to gradually change and supplant it from within. Recently, in The Times of London, has this to say:

"The leader of the Anglican Church in Scotland today accuses the churches of homophobia and links this to 'ignorant' Bible texts. The Right Rev Richard Holloway, Bishop of Edinburgh, will tell the conference of the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement in London: 'Violent homophobia is still alive and kicking, and much of it is motivated by religious zeal.' He says: 'The Bible, though it is one of our greatest treasures, is also our greatest danger.' In his address, released yesterday to The Times, Bishop Holloway says that traditional religions are being abandoned as 'primitive superstitions' because they cannot change. 'This is why many feminists have abandoned Christianity,' he says.

'They see it as incurably patriarchal and oppressive'. He says the Bible can no longer be read as a fixed and unchanging law, and must be seen as 'flawed and fallible'. Declaring that eventually the churches will accept homosexuality, he says: 'We have recently abandoned the text's tyranny over women, as we abandoned its justification of slavery, and soon we'll abandon its ignorant misunderstanding of homosexuality.'"

I am not a Christian, so I cannot tell the Christians how to resolve this problem, as disconcerting as it may seem. However, I welcome those who want to fight this scourge of secularism.

Secularisation so defined in its true nature corresponds exactly with what is going on in the spiritual, intellectual, rational, physical and material life of Western man and his culture and civilisation. I is true only when applied to describe the nature and existential condition of Western culture and civilisation.

The claim that secularisation has its roots in Biblical faith and that it is the fruit of the Gospel has no substance in historical fact. Secularisation has its roots not in Biblical faith, but in the interpretation of Biblical faith by Western man; it is not the fruit of the Gospel, but it is the fruit of the long history of philosophical and metaphysical conflict in the religious and purely rationalistic world view of Western man. Of all the great revealed religions, Christianity alone shifted its centre of origin,

from Jerusalem to Rome, symbolising the beginning of the Westernisation of Christianity and its gradual and successive permeation by Western elements that in subsequent periods of its history produced and accelerated the momentum of secularisation. This is why, for the Muslim, there are two versions of Christianity: the original/true one, and the Western version of it.

Having made Christianity western, the western man had since inclined to regard his culture and civilisation as man's cultural vanguard and his own experience and consciousness as those representative of, in the secular logic, the most evolved of the species, so that we are all in the process of lagging behind them, as it were, and will come to realise the same experience and consciousness in due course sometime. It is with this attitude that they, believing in their own absurd theories of human evolution, view human history and development and religion and religious experience and consciousness. It was this trend that led to the separation of Church and State, for the Church has now lost most influence and was no longer relevant.

We reject, totally, the validity of the truth of their assertion, with regard to secularisation and their theories and interpretation of knowledge based on their experience and consciousness and belief, to speak on our behalf. We reject them, along with their clones amongst us, Muslim or Christian. The secularisation that describes its true nature clearly when applied to describe western man and his culture and civilisation cannot be accepted as true if it is intended to be a description of what is going on around the world; it cannot be accepted as true if it is intended to be a description of man in which it is also meant to be applicable to the religion of Islam and the Muslims. Islam totally rejects any application to itself of the concepts secular or secularisation or secularism as they do not belong and are alien to it in every respect; and they belong and are natural only to the intellectual history of Western-Christian religious experience and consciousness.

Nevertheless, we must see, in view of the fact that secularisation is not merely confined to the Western world, that their experience of it and their attitude towards it is most instructive for Muslims.

Islam is not similar to Christianity in this respect that secularization in the way in which it is also happening in the Muslim world has not and will not necessarily affect our beliefs in the same way it does the beliefs of Western man. For that matter Islam is not the same as Christianity, whether as a religion or as a civilization. However, problems arising out of secularization, though not the same as those confronting Western Christianity, have certainly caused much confusion in our midst. It is most significant to us that these problems are caused by the introduction of

Western ways of thinking and judging and believing, emulated by some Muslim scholars and intellectuals and ordinary folks who have been unduly influenced by the West and overawed by its scientific and technological achievements, who by virtue of the fact that they can be thus influenced betray their lack of true understanding and full grasp of both the Islamic as well as the Western world views and essential beliefs and modes of thought that project them; who have, because of their influential positions in Muslim society, become conscious or unconscious disseminators of unnecessary confusion and ignorance. The situation in our midst can indeed be seen as critical when we consider the fact that the Muslim Community is generally unaware of what the secularizing process implies; hence our cry for the populace to be well informed about what the establishment of the constitutional assembly meant and what it could recommend and, the ramification of those recommendations if implemented.

The parallel between Christianity in the Middle ages and Islam is very close. The evidence of history shows early Christianity as consistently opposed to secularization, and this opposition, engendered by the demeaning of nature and the divesting of its spiritual and theological significance, continued throughout its history of the losing battle against the secularizing forces entrenched paradoxically within the very threshold of Western Christianity. The separation of Church and State, of religious and temporal powers was never the result of an attempt on the part of Christianity to bring about secularization. On the contrary, it was the result of the secular western philosophical attitude set against what it considered as anti-secular encroachment of the ambivalent Church based on the teachings of the eclectic religion. The separation represented for Christianity a status quo in the losing battle against secular forces; and even that status quo was gradually eroded away so that today very little ground is left for the religion to play any significant social and political role in the secular States of the Western world. The Nigerian Christians do not have to remove all semblance of spirituality from their social and political life, and suffer the same fate as their western brethren, the choice, however, is theirs. The Nigerian Christians do not have the right or authority to dictate to the Muslims what to believe or practise, especially in matters such as the Shari'ah.

In Islam, the antithesis between the individual and the State or the government is not recognized, and no need is therefore felt to reconcile and abolish this antithesis. Islam knows no distinction between State and Church, so to speak. In Islam there is no doctrine of temporal end which belongs to the State and the eternal end which belongs to, and is the prerogative of the Church. No balance between the two, each equal to the other when acting in its own sphere; each equally dependent on the other when acting in the sphere of the other and no tension between the Community and the Church as custodian of the universal common elements in human

existence. The basis of the State, for the Muslim, is ideological, not political, territorial, or ethnical, and the primary purpose of the State was to defend and protect the Faith, not the State. It is here the structure and principles of the constitution become very important. We belong to one and the same country and wish to live happily together, with every group in the society respecting the rights of the others to live as they see fit.

Could the constitution not accommodate the Shari'ah as well as the secular laws others wish for? What is constitution? By constitution it is meant that assemblage of laws, institutions and customs, derived from certain fixed principles of reason, directed to certain fixed objects of public good, that compose the general system, according to which the community has agreed to be governed. That is to say, a constitution is the document in which are set out the rules governing the composition, powers, and methods of operation of the main institutions of government, and the general principles applicable to their relations to the citizens. A constitution is a thing antecedent to a government, and a government is only a creature of the constitution. A constitution is not the act of government, but of a people constituting a government. In Nigeria, the only constitution that fits this criterion is the one left by the founding fathers. Further, a constituted authority is one that is defined, and there can be no definition which does not of necessity imply a limitation. A constitutional government is and must be a limited government if it is constitutional at all. Whatever its form may be, whether aristocratic, democratic, or theocratic, in any state that we may properly call constitutional, the supreme authority must be defined and defined by a law that puts bounds to arbitrary will.

Our founding fathers demanded and received a federal constitution from the British colonial rulers, with this as one of its cardinal principles: "Each Region shall have complete legislative and executive autonomy with respect to all matters except, 1. Defence; 2. External Affairs; 3. Customs; and, 4. West African Research Institutions." The House of Commons later also resolved that the Nigerian constitution should provide greater Regional autonomy and to remove power of intervention from the Centre in matters that could, without detriment to the other Regions, be placed entirely within Regional competence. They also recommended that the Regional legislature should become sovereign, and no other body in Nigeria could have the authority to alter their decisions on their own subjects.

The implications of this meant that each region could develop its own constitution reflecting its values, custom, and even religion. The federal government as the government of the Federation would have specific duties delegated to it. This, in addition to those adumbrated, of course, will include Postal Services and monetary policies. This is similar to the arrangements in the United States, where the individual states are sovereign and have their constitution separate from the federal constitution. There

is no reason why our separate regions could not develop their own constitutions.

It is primarily to address the interest of the Muslims that our founding fathers settled for a federal constitution. This is to enable the Muslims to continue to practise the constitution they have had all the while, before and during the colonial period.

The Shari'ah had been practised in the North long before the British colonial rulers came. It is our view, therefore, that our federal constitution must make room for the Shari'ah if it is not to oppress a very large section of the population. The federal government could and should have a secular Supreme Court as well as a Shari'ah Supreme Court. It is a travesty of justice that a legal matter initiated in a Shari'ah court should end, on appeal, in a secular court. The Shari'ah is not a law in the western sense, it is a very important aspect of a Muslim religious worldview. Shari'ah governs and determines what is right or wrong in any act, spiritual (ibadah) or non-spiritual (mu'amalat) matters, as well as all aspects of Muslim's personal and inter-personal, private and public, ethical, social, political, national and international relations. It has, as its basic objectives, the protection of the religion, life, mind, ownership of property, commerce, family, and society of Muslims. The Shari'ah, then, comprises all that might be positively called law and occupies the central place in the Islamic system of final authority and ordering principle. Abiding by the Shari'ah is a religious requirement, and so is judging Muslims by it. It is well within Muslims' right to demand to be governed and judged by the Shari'ah within their territorial space. A Federal System is well suited to accommodate this, hence the demand of our founding fathers for it.

What is the basis for the objection to Shari'ah? We cannot see or imagine one and none has been tendered, except for the simple hatred of Muslims and Islam. The Shari'ah is not a law to be imposed on non-Muslims in a Muslim territory. If the Jataus, Okogies and their kind had genuine complaints, they could have demanded for a special Bill of Rights to be incorporated into the Federal Constitution, to safeguard the rights of minorities in any of the regions in the country. Islam appreciates the fact that non-Muslims may not wish to be judged by the Shari'ah, and adequate measures are there within the Shari'ah itself to protect the interest of non-Muslims, in addition to which the federal government could create a Bill of Rights. It is sad and disappointing that learned people such as Archbishops Okogie and Jatau are making statements about something they appear to have no knowledge. Muslims do not dabble in other peoples' faith, particularly when the matter has no direct bearing on themselves, why are the Christian ministers worried that Muslims may have Shari'ah? We live in a multi-cultural and multi-religious society, those who are in the position

of influence

should be careful that their unguarded utterances do not stir passion and hatred among our people. Making such reckless remarks, given our political and religious sensitivities is the most evil thing to do.

Finally, if as they said, "They want to pray for the peace of our fatherland where all should be free to practice our faith or religion according to our conscience and conviction." Why are they putting obstacles in the way of Muslims trying to observe their religion according to their conscience and convictions?

 The Guardian
 Wednesday, April 14, 1999

CAN advises against inclusion of Sharia in constitution
 By Dickson Adeyanju, Religious Affairs Reporter

THE dust over the place of Sharia in the country's body politic is yet to settle and apprehension rises still with the release of the new constitution not far away. Perhaps, more piqued, the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) yesterday advised the Federal Government against the inclusion of the controversial Sharia in the new constitution which Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar promised would be released by end of the month.

According to the umbrella association of the estimated 50 million Christians in the country, the inclusion of Sharia may permanently lead to division and acrimony.

The president of the association, Dr. Sunday Mbang, alleged at a press conference in his office yesterday, that the Sharia issue has held up the release of the constitution as members of the Provisional Ruling Council (PRC) have been divided over it.

"Information reaching us indicate that in the last three or four sittings of the council, they have been unable to reach a consensus over the issue." He added: "At our CAN quarterly meeting held in Enugu recently, we realised that the Section 10 of the 1979 Constitution stated that no government, either state or federal, shall adopt any religion as a state religion. We are worried about entrenching the Sharia in the constitution as it may mean that Nigeria is an Islamic country. It is necessary now to draw the attention of the government to consequences of this action."

Mbang, who is the Prelate of the Methodist Church of Nigeria, said since the present crop of leaders of CAN has been tolerant and approached issues such as that of Sharia and the Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC) with

caution, upcoming Christian leaders may approach them differently. There was a time when it was believed that anything done to the Niger Delta people, nothing will happen. But we have been proved wrong today. The government and everybody is now begging the youths of that area. The story is now different. In the same manner we are beginning to have Christians who are more radical and may not accept things as we accept them. Our belief is that a stitch in time saves nine. We ask the PRC to delete, from the constitution, anything that shows bias for religion in the new constitution to be promulgated," the CAN leader said.

According to him, the warning has become imperative so as not to turn Nigeria into a Lebanon by making it a battle ground over differences in religious beliefs.

"It is our candid opinion and we stand firmly on it that we should avoid anything that will turn this country and its peace loving people into another Lebanon. We should avoid it and today we must begin to avoid it. We should rather work towards having a country that everyone of us either from Maiduguri, Port Harcourt, Sokoto, Calabar and other parts can be proud of. "A country where religion and tribe do not determine what one gets in terms of position, appointment, election into offices and admission to schools; this should be our dreams and pre-occupation now," he said.

Dr. Mbang, however, declined to give details of what will be the reaction of CAN if the constitution is released with the Sharia included.

He added that the association has written to the head of state over the issue after its Enugu meeting but has not received any response.

He said: "We have not heard anything. But we have heard the rumour that the head of state is planning to meet with both Islamic and Christian leaders. I believe that the head of state and his lieutenants are sincere about their commitment to the peace, progress and development of this country. I also believe they will never do anything now that will put the country in crisis after they have left government."

Dr. Banu Az-Zubair, M. K.
 Human Molecular Genetics Group
 Department of Pathology
 University of Cambridge
 Tennis Court Road
 Cambridge CB2 1QP
 United Kingdom

(C) 1999 Copyright - Today Communications Ltd

=====

Wed, 14 Apr 1999 01:54:42 +0000
From:
news@nigerianews.net
To:
nigerianews@mailing-list.net

Nigeria News Network - www.NigeriaNews.net

=====

News Headlines for 14th April 1999

=====

8. Muslims Set to Evolve Agenda for Fourth Republic

MUSLIM community in Ogun State, the home state of the President-elect, General Olusegun Obasanjo is set to evolve a durable agenda for good governance in the Fourth Republic.

Towards this end, this year's celebration of Hijrah 1420 (the Islamic New Year) in the state has been dedicated to the evolution of this agenda which is aimed at saving the country from the mistakes of the past.

A release signed by the Coordinator and Relation Officer of the state chapter of the National Council of Muslim Youth Organisation (NACOMYO) Alhaji Komaldeen Akintunde and Public Relations Officer, Alhaji Lukman Lasisi indicated that an array of Islamic scholars have been invited for this purpose.

NACOMYO which is the organiser of the annual Hijrah celebration in the state further disclosed that the theme for this year celebration "Nigeria what prospects for good governance" had been chosen to express the Muslim point of view on the path for the restoration of the dignity of this country.

The organisation stated that most of the mistakes of the past would have been avoided if the religious bodies in the country had provided necessary guidance for the political class on how to rule in accordance with the will of God.

Critical issues in governance to be addressed during the celebration by a pack of Islamic intellectual to be led by a reknown cleric and university don, Professor Rashid Raji from the university of Ilorin include attributes of good governance, the issue of corruption and other vices that bedevilled our past experience and the way forward.

Considering the strategic position of the state in the past and present political activities of the country, the organisation said, Ogun State Muslims owed it as a responsibilities to guide political actors from the state on how to make necessary impacts in making Nigeria a stronger and more respected nation as we approach the next millennium.

=====
 Nigeria News Network - www.NigeriaNews.net
 =====

News Headlines for 19th March 1999

3. Moslems Want Sharia Law Enshrined in Constitution ... CAN kicks against it

AS Nigerians await the promulgation of a new constitution that will ultimately guide the incoming civilian administration, the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs has renewed its call for the enshrinment of Sharia law in the constitution. But Christians in the country have kicked against it.

The call was contained in a communique signed by the secretary general of the council Dr. Abdulateef Adegbite Monday after a meeting in Kaduna.

The council was insistent that the Sharia law must accompany the new constitution that will usher in the civilian government in May.

The communique said that Sharia law in the constitution is the only way to reflect the diverse religious nature of the country.

Furthermore, the council called on all the states of southern Nigeria with large Muslim population to encourage the practice of Sharia law. "This is the only way the constitution of the country will be seen to be for all," it stated.

The 19 northern states branches of the Christian Association of

Nigeria have condemned the call with an argument that it does not reflect the true spirit of federalism.

The association also argues that such a move will only tear the country apart as it seems to make Nigeria a Moslem state.

However, the Moslem council insists that since power has shifted to the south, Sharia law is absolutely necessary in order to strike a balance. The council also argues that the absence of the Sharia law in the constitution is the cause of high crime rate, corruption and even poor standard of education.

=====xxxx

NEWSPAPER A YAU Sept 3- 9, 1999

2 Discussion re how Govt of Zamfara, Alh. Ahmed Sani is going to have Muslims of his state vote on whether to have shari'a in his state.

Another Muslim warns that this will be very difficult to achieve unless the needs of the poor are met first.

10 Islam is comprehensive.

GASKIYA TA FI KWABO May 20 99

4 re matter of beard being compulsory for Muslims== full page!

9 Report on CAN having a prayer day for the new govt. Written by a Christian, I think. The idea is praised.

12 Alh. Abdullahi Lawal Malumfashi: Govt gives more respect to soccer than to pilgrimage. Calls on Govt to show greater respect for religion

MAY 13 99

9 Christian column. Calling on Christians to love all the reps in the Majalisa, incl. non-Christians. Calling on all reps to be positive in their rep work for sake of God.

16 Calling on Nigerian Airways with respect to pilgrimage. xxxx