

“Comment, Notes and Articles about the Miss World Pageant”

[A Rejoinder to Dr. Jan H. Boer's Article: The Anatomy of Miss World. By John Balogun *](#)

(GAMJI)

I read the above article written by one Dr. Jan H. Boer with utter astonishment and helplessness. I couldn't help marveling at the confident manner Dr. Boer displayed his shameless ignorance of Islam. Mine is not a long meaningless grammar, rather an attempt to draw Dr. Boer's attention to some avoidable misconceptions that polluted his articles...

NOTES FOR BOER'S ARTICLE: *ANATOMY OF MISS WORLD*

Outline of article

Summary of notes

Notes

Articles of response xxxx

OUTLINE OF ARTICLE

Background History

Pre-Colonial Religious and Social Chaos
Reformation under Uthman Danfodio
Colonial Christo-Secularism
The Fundamentalist Revival
Women's Fashions

The Pageant

Religious Resistance
The Political Equation
The Role of Worldviews
The Ruckus

Reactions

ThisDay
Muslims
Christians
Non-religious
Governments
Miss World Organization

International Relevance of Miss World 2002

Sources

NOTES:

Christian Courier Dec 16, 2002 p. 8--article originating from Josiah Fearon

VANCOUVER SUN 22 NOV 2002 by Glenn McKenzie Hard copy

Offensive picture of MW girls and one of Amina (she would be offended by the other picture)

How the TD insult led to violence and death

The pageant scheduled for Dec 7 in Abuja

Muslims: the event promotes promiscuity and indecency

The quote from the writer

TD ran front-page apology and explanation

Description of the violence

Response of police and govt—curfew

Earlier warnings of Muslims vs MW

At least hold until after Ramadan

Also boycotts re Amina

Why in Nigeria—Agbani Darego first African to be MW

GUARDIAN NOV 25, 2002

BY AKHAINE ET al

1000 arrested from 4 days of violence that devastated Kaduna

No need for judicial commission of enquiry

Governor: not religion or ethnicity, but those who vs peace

Suspects paraded publicly

100 arrested in Abuja

Governor: we will leave no stone unturned. Decisive action

Spark: the pageant and the TD

Perpetrators sought a wider conflict

Churches: Need for peaceful co-existence and law abiding

Root is poverty

Be careful not to just blame politicians. That is all wrong.

A Muslim: vs killing Christians who knew nothing about the blasphemy

The Muslims who killed them are the transgressors

They should have sued TD, not killed Christians

Other Muslim groups same

Blame govt and security for being slow.
Genesis of the riot a lawyer who leaked the TD article. His motive—
Stats re dead unclear—200? 215?

NJOKU__
Governor of Enugu State—need dialogue

OLOKO—
Contestants were made to feel guilty
Baptists: Blame security for not forestalling this
Editor of TD arrested

THIS DAY Dec 2, 2002
VS the Fatwa
FG and Zamfara responsible if Daniel is hurt.

Dec 2 2002
Soyinka: govt responsible
People killed at slightest provocation

GUARDIAN DEC 2 2002
Many Nigerian groups vs the fatwa or death sentence
Inspired by willful manipulation of religious passion”
FG must call Zamfara to order
Govt held responsible if Daniel to die

Soldiers arrest sharia scribe in Kaduna for complicity
RC Bishop blames extremists of both religions
SG now realizes that it was not only TD article that led to the riot.
There are some powerful individuals behind it.—Politically motivated.
Resolved to punish.
Northern politicians use religion to retain economic status quo
Incl those from southern Kaduna
Danger of almajirai on the streets—front runners in riots
Three riots in Kaduna in 2002—eg
Christian and Muslim hoodlums—their role—use religion as cover
This fatwa based on ignorance, in ji Okogie

THIS DAY DEC 4 2002 hard copy
Rimi --due to govt not providing security and protection to the people.
--Do not blame rioters, for they under provocation
--Blame the newspaper
By Nwezeh—
Muslim govt minister—religion does not guaranteed violence and
intolerance. Religion vs such.

Muslims to work for peace, unity, justice etc.
By Adeyemo
Governor: the TD should be forgiven
Islam requires us to forgive, in ji Qur'an

GUARDIAN DEC 4 2002

P. 1 OR 3 Zamfara's fatwa vs Isioma Daniel, the writer of TD
Everyone was against this violence
Forgiveness issue and apology
National consensus vs the fatwa, incl Sultan, FG, Saudi
Prosperity gospel
Iran revolution has led to militancy
Above complicated by Nigerian politics
Yerima using relig for politics
Religion promises a better life
With diff religions, only the law is our meeting point.
Govt MUST take strong action, otherwise moderates have to become
militant

By Oladimeje p. 2 of 3
Early opposition to MW due to Amina Lawal death sentence. Govt cleared
it.
Nigeria is fragile society ready to explode any time.
Hoodlums always seize the opportunity.
Secularism only if govt is separate from religion
Govt must unmask the people behind it all.
Gana: intern'l conspiracy has taken MW to UK
No, Nigeria is to blame.

VANGUARD DEC 6 2002

The riot brings up questionz of secular status and tolerance
Buhari c s condemn the riot
Fatwa only vs Muslim. Christians not under sharia
Must accept the call for forgiveness, esp during ramadan

GUARDIAN DEC 6, 2002

A Muslim: Islam vs such killing and asks youth not to allow themselves to be
used.
However, Muslims not to allow heresy vs Muhammad and Jesus
Gbinije—
Use his introductory par for my introduction?
Muslims vs its timing and morality from the beginning
Mrs. Obasanjo involved—eg

TD created a conduit for venting Muslim anger vs the event.
Should Nigeria be divided between Muslims and Christians?
Time to counter Muslim fundies
No more cheek—what CAN must do
Muslims must accept plea for forgiveness

Aderibigbe—

It is sign of unresolved issues
It was a political act.
Problem is that one tribe feels it can foist itself on all.

CAN will accept no more killing of Christians by northern Muslims—Onomu...
Squarely blames Muslims. No more cheek
CAN has a secret plan how to defend
CAN will monitor govt follow up of the riots and who gets punished.
Re ecumeniical centre in Abuja—how to proceed now.

OSEHA

RC on diversity of faiths

AKHEINE—

Youth group to exposes sponsors of the riot
Unhappy with result of previous riots—guilty always released.

GUARDIAN DEC 9, 2002

Reaction of sponsoring organ

New queen: Miss Turkey

Miss Daniel is a young writer. Forgive her—in ji organizers

Feminist vs MW as a sexist market

UK TV did not cover the event in UK, though foreigners did.

Swimsuit parade discontinued decades ago. It is a family affair, beautiful—eg

But Nigerian TV showed them in bikinis.

The sponsoring organ is some 50 years old.

Boycott by UK TV because of Amina originally.

Gana: conspiracy ; Manager of NTA: racism

VANGUARD DEC 10 2002

Washington Post art. Re sharia and census—eg

Census concerns—history

Why Muslim organs vs the fatwa—no authority

Sharia is not to cover non-Muslims

Sokoto is the real capital, not Abuja—eg

Why did not those who vs the M W not shut down their TV?

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ARTICLES BELOW FROM THIS DAY DEC 2, 2002 TILL NOTICE BELOW
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Freedom Organisation Condemns Kaduna Riots

By Bayo Adeleke GUARDIAN

A Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), Free-dom Organisation of Nigeria (FON) has condemned the recent riot that led to the loss of lives and property in Kaduna.

In a statement signed by its National Chairman, Mr. Frank Ohwofa, the group said the incident was "a clear evidence that the state of our nation is in a dilemma that could disintegrate us and our set rules and values as human being."

The group also decried the gruesome murder of Ogun State gubernatorial aspirant Chief Dele Arojo and the killing of three persons including a chieftain of PDP in Edo State.

"Our political class must wake up to the task of nation building as protection of lives and property is the government's responsibility" the statement said, adding "Nobody is immune to violent crime."

It urged the government to urgently join hands with FON in the battle to restore and instill discipline, peace and tolerance in the nation's political setting. FON charged the government to foster justice and fairness by distributing the dividends of democracy equitably.

"Government must as a matter of urgency disengage itself from white elephant projects and begin to engage in masses-oriented projects" it charged, saying "it is only under this platform we can sustain the relative peace that is being canvassed by Freedom Organisation of Nigeria to build a virile nation for the benefit of this generation and the one yet unborn."

The group also appealed to all religious leaders, traditional rulers and politicians to look inward as a people with a common destiny to stop manipulating the youths in engaging them in violent acts that are inimical to socio-economic development and loss of lives and property.

Meanwhile, the organisation has expressed its heart-felt sympathy to the management and staff of "Leaders and Company Limited," publishers of THISDAY Newspapers over the loss suffered by the company in the recent riot in Kaduna and Abuja. It also condoled with all families of the victims.

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Artists, Writers Condemn Fatwa on THISDAY Reporter

By Constance Ikokuw THIS DAY

A group of writers, artists and concerned Nigerian citizens overseas have condemned the fatwa issued by the Deputy Governor of Zamfara State, Alhaji Mamuda Aliyu Shinkafi against a staff of THISDAY Newspapers, Miss Isioma Daniel

The religious edict was issued by Shinkafi as a result of an article written by Daniel in the November 16 issue of the newspaper which was considered offensive by Muslims.

But in a statement signed by Akin Adesokan, Chris Abani, Odi Ofeimun and 30 others Nigerian artists and writers at home and abroad, described the edict as a "needless, wicked, inhuman ploy to further polarize our country. We condemn this call for the religious assassination of Isioma Daniel".

The statement noted that Daniel did not commit any crime under the secular, federal laws of the country, adding that an attempt on her life would be punishable by law. It also stated that Daniel's fundamental human rights, including her right to life, as enshrined in the Nigerian Constitution and International Law must be guaranteed by the federal government.

They called on the federal government to ensure that no harm befalls the journalist who has since left the country.

"We hold both the Muslim leaders of Zamfara State and President Obasanjo responsible should Miss Daniel come to any harm for being a journalist. The Federal government and its officers will stand charged of complicity and dereliction of duty should it fail to condemn this fatwa imposed on a Nigerian citizen" it stated.

Speaking on the situation of the country presently, the statement which regretted that so many lives have been lost through the incident said that any attempt to further deepen the animosity between Nigerians is "unacceptable and unconscionable".

It also said that "such divisive tactics to cause further hate and suffering to innocent citizens cannot be in the name of Prophet Mohammed or in the spirit of the holy month of prayer and absolution".

The group commiserated with those who lost persons and properties during the riot in Kaduna, while calling for a Sovereign National Conference to put in place generally accepted terms of union of the federating units in the country. They called on the National Assembly and the State Houses of Assembly to set the framework for such a conference before the next

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Miss World: Onyeador Out to Blackmail First Lady - Allianz

From Paul Ibe in Abuja

Ms. Angela Onyeador's threat to initiate court action against the First Lady, Mrs. Stella Obasanjo, Director General of the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), Mr. Ben Murray Bruce and Allianz Nigeria Limited, exclusive marketing company of the botched Miss World 2002 in Nigeria is premature and politically motivated, the Chief Executive Officer of Allianz, Mr. Fidelis Anosike has said.

Onyeador had at the weekend threatened court action against Mrs. Obasanjo, Bruce and Allianz for allegedly cheating her of ₦200,000 being money she guaranteed for the hosting of the Miss World Gala dinner in London November 10.

Anosike told THISDAY yesterday in Abuja that Onyeador's action is far from noble and that it is aimed at scoring cheap political points by denigrating the person of Mrs. Obasanjo.

The CEO of Allianz emphasized that the First Lady has "absolutely nothing to do with the said transaction," adding, "it was purely business relationship between Angela (Onyeador) and Allianz and of which she was aware of the implications."

Debunking allegations that Onyeador was cheated of the funds she helped in guaranteeing, Anosike said that Mrs. Obasanjo was only helping out by giving the desired political leverage to the event,

which he said was a window for redeeming the image of the country.

"The First Lady was merely helping out because her charity organization is one of the beneficiaries of the event," he said.

Noting that the transaction is one guided by the law, Anosike called on Onyeador to stop embarrassing the First Lady and desist from her campaign of calumny.

Anosike said that contrary to Onyeador's allegation her money is safe, the event having been sponsored by the Rivers State government and would be paid to her after she reconciles the account of the exhibition she hosted as part of the Gala dinner and the Miss World Organisation, recipients of the funds has done same.

"The money is with Miss World Organisation. The account is awaiting reconciliation both from her and the Miss World Organisation.

"She sold art works at the auction apart from the fact that she had sponsors. She has not reconciled her accounts. She has ulterior motives of dragging the First Lady into public odium," he said.

After the reconciliation of the accounts, Allianz CEO said, Onyeador will be paid whatever shortfall there exists. "We have an indemnity from Silverbirds and Miss World Organisation, who were the recipients of the sponsorship funds."

Anosike stated that Onyeador has no legal grounds to sue anyone since the agreement, which she entered into and was prepared by her lawyers; Shola Rhodes & Co is clear and not ambiguous.

Tracing the genesis of the business relationship, Anosike said that a friend of Onyeador's had told her about the event after which she called to know how she can be a part of it.

He said that there were two others who were prepared to put up the bond, but that Onyeador "begged" to put up the bond, which was a consideration for her doing an exhibition at the London event.

Agreement papers dated August 29, 2002, which was signed by Anosike on behalf of Allianz Nigeria Ltd., and Onyeador on behalf of Save A Life Today Foundation (SALT) and witnessed by Mr. Charles Anosike and Mr. Sunday Chukwudi shows that:

_Allianz which was appointed the Exclusive Marketing Company for the Miss World 2002 Competition (hereinafter called "The Competition") hereby and on behalf of the Miss World Organisation appoints SALT as the official "Charity Company" in consideration of the posting of a 30-day banks guarantee from a reputable International Bank of the sum of €200,000:00 (Two Hundred Thousand Pounds Sterling) in favour of the Miss World Organisation this bank guarantee is primarily to guarantee the event.

_This appointment also confers on SALT, the rights to host and stage an "African Art Exhibition at the said World Charity Dinner: This Exhibition, which shall be a total embodiment of all that is 1st class, beautiful, colourful and traditional about African Art, would be managed by SALT's sister company, the African Foundation for the Arts (AFA).

_SALT shall use its best endeavours to ensure adequate and proper sponsorship for the successful hosting of the said African Art Exhibition.

_All arrangements for the said African Art Exhibition must as far as possible conform with the standards specified by the Miss World Organisation in relation to the event.

_In consideration for providing the bank guarantee SALT shall receive 60% of net profit accruable from the show. 40% will be distributed to other charities at the sole discretion of Allianz and Miss World Organisation. All payments will be domiciled via the bank nominated by SALT and approved by Allianz i.e. HSBC Bank, No. 2, Craven Road, Paddington W.2. London.

In return Onyeador's SALT will pay Allianz 30 per cent of the 60 per cent it receives as net profit from the show and 50 per cent of all proceeds accruable from the African Art Exhibition.

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Aftermath of Kaduna Riots...

Soyinka Wants FG to Take Blame for Death Toll

By Joseph Ushigiale THIS DAY DEC 2, 2002

Two weeks after the violent eruptions in Kaduna and Abuja against the Miss World beauty pageant and a THISDAY story on it, which Muslims considered offensive, Nobel laureate, Prof. Wole Soyinka has said the Federal Government should take responsibilities for the death of over 200 people and the destruction of properties worth close to a billion naira.

Soyinka who spoke in Lagos weekend at the fifth anniversary and endowment fund launch organised by the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) said if the Federal Government had asserted itself on the need to protect the federal character of the nation and the provisions of its constitution on religion, there would have been no ground for mindless killings of people.

According to him, the Federal Government should be blamed for "refusing to accept responsibility for those who were killed, maimed and property destroyed in broad day light; refusal and acceptance of responsibility for the right of every individual in this pluralistic society."

Soyinka also berated the Inspector General of Police, Mr. Tafa Balogun, and heads of other security agencies for their complacency in allowing what he described as an inciting call for murder (Fatwa) by the deputy governor of Zamfara State, Alhaji Mamudu Aliyu Shinkafi, against the writer of the offensive article in THISDAY, Miss Isioma Daniel.

"I have also watched in consternation the call to murder. I am equally surprised that till date there hasn't been a suit either from the Federal Government, Inspector General of Police or the security agencies against the individual who is inciting Nigerians to a murder. Enough is enough," Soyinka warned.

"We have worked hard to put this nation together, but for those who want to separate it, let them understand that we can no longer go down as second class citizens in this country," he added.

Soyinka noted that while there has arisen wide condemnation of what he described as a "chance glancing utterance of an individual, I have not heard the same intense condemnation for people who have been killed".

According to him, "there has also not been demand for punishment for those plunging this country into the unbelievable path of disintegration. I do not understand what is going on. The sacrifices we made were not to turn this country into a theocratic state".

He condemned what he described as the sanctimonious position of the Islamic leaders in the country in relation to the apology by the management of THISDAY for the offensive publication.

"I am disappointed that the so-called national leaders are offering sanctimonious statements about accepting an apology, culminating in the statement credited to the Islamic organisation which said - we hope that everybody knows a lesson has been learnt- I am disappointed".

He maintained that in consideration of the secularity of the country as enshrined in the 1999 Constitution, "we should not allow the imposition of the theocratic arrogance of others on the totality of this nation. We are in a situation where the tail is wagging the dog".

Soyinka, however, enjoined the Federal Government to " act to stop the impudence at which our people are slaughtered and maimed at the slightest provocation".

Also speaking as a guest lecturer at the occasion, Prof Abdoulaye Bathily, a member of both the Senegalese National Assembly and ECOWAS, enjoined African leaders and politicians to contribute positively towards changing the image of the continent through a concerted fight against such policies that will entrench marginalisation and exclusion in the polity.

Bathily urged African leaders to take into account, the plural characteristics of their respective countries alongside other issues as diversity, notion of national identity from plural point of view and manage them equitably.

He also called for the revisitation of borders inherited from colonial masters, as according to him, "they are never known to be instrument of development. Their divisive nature is self evident".

Bathily also advocated a rejuvenation of the concept of African Solidarity, adding that revisiting the Pan Africanism concept will provide a vehicle for effective change if any meaningful progress or survival is to be achieved in an emergingly competitive world.

He stressed that "integration is the tool to remove distractive, divisive and indolent political and religious ideologies. Africa can only emerge a dynamic actor in the world scene if it competes successfully in development and scientific direction".

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ARTICLES BELOW FROM GUARDIAN DEC 2, 2002 TILL FURTHER NOTICE

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Writers, artists condemn death sentence on reporter

LIVING up to their calling as apostles of free expressions and defenders of human rights abuse, a group of writers and artists, mostly based abroad with a sprinkle from home, has joined in the criticism of the declaration of a death sentence on the *ThisDay* reporter, Ms. Isioma Daniel who wrote the article on Miss World that was believed to have sparked the recent riot in Kaduna and later, Abuja.

In a statement jointly issued, the writers, regretted the violence that broke out in Kaduna and parts of Abuja and noted that it had been inspired by "willful manipulation of religious passion."

The statement described as "objectionable", the imposition of *fatwa* on the head of the reporter, and lamented the fact "that the Muslim leaders of Zamfara State are making this hateful call at all, but particularly so when the orgy of violence has not quite subsided".

The artists, 33 in number and comprising some notable names in the arts including the New York-based artistic director of the influential *Documenta* exhibition in Kasel Germany, Okwui Enwezor, South Africa-based former lecturer at the University of Ibadan, Harry Garuba and poet-journalist,

Odia Ofeimun in Lagos, condemned the *fatwa* by Zamfara deputy governor as a "a needless, wicked, inhuman ploy to further polarise our country".

They added: "Religion, organised or otherwise, is a form of communion, a medium for community-building. We condemn this call for the religious assassination of Daniel".

To the Federal Government, the artists urged an immediate action to call the Zamfara government to order, saying "We demand that the federal government and its agents take a clear and firm stand on this matter of Muslim leaders demanding the head of a fellow citizen on account of their religious faith".

They pledged to hold President Olusegun Obasanjo and Muslim leaders in Zamfara responsible should any harm come to the reporter.

Text of the statement titled *Nigerians Against Fatwa On Isioma Daniel*, reads: "We the undersigned, writers, artists and citizens of Nigeria worldwide wish to register our unequivocal condemnation of the religious death sentence or *fatwa* passed by Muslim leaders in Zamfara State on Ms. Isioma Daniel of ThisDay newspaper.

"In the past week, a number of Nigeria cities has been thrown into a situation of utter chaos stemming from the willful manipulation of religious passion. The country has not even begun to take account of the enormous cost that this latest round of violence means for the political or psychological health of the citizens. Nor can we start calculating what this latest ugly incident means for the status of the country in the world, knowing that our country is increasingly taking on the image of an insecure space for the exercise of all the fundamental human rights.

"We regret the unfortunate consequences of the article authored by Daniel. We commiserate with those of our fellow citizens who have lost persons or properties to the riots. We regret the impact of the riots and their immediate consequences on the corporate image of Nigeria, and are especially concerned that this is coming so soon after so many other acts of bloodletting, too many to count. In the past ten years, at least citizens of Nigeria have been needlessly victimised by political, ethnic and religious riots, such that the basic confidence that a citizen is free to assume in the society is all but shattered.

"However, the country has lost so many lives in this incident that we consider any attempts to further deepen the animosity between fellow citizens as both unacceptable and unconscionable. Such divisive tactics that cause further hate and suffering to innocent citizens cannot be in the name of the Prophet (Peace be upon Him) or the spirit of the Holy Month of prayer and abstinence.

"It is objectionable that the Muslim leaders of Zamfara State are making this hateful call at all, but particularly so when the orgy of violence has not quite subsided. This is a needless, wicked, inhuman ploy to further polarise our country. Religion, organised or otherwise, is a form of communion, a medium for community-building. We condemn this call for the religious assassination of Daniel. We demand that the federal government and its agents take a clear and firm stand on this matter of Muslim leaders demanding the head of a fellow citizen on account of their religious faith. For the avoidance of doubt, given that Ms. Daniel *did not* commit any crime under our secular, federal laws, any attempt on her life would be a capital crime punishable by law. Ms. Daniel's fundamental human rights, including her right to life, as enshrined in the Nigerian Constitution and

International Law, must be guaranteed by the Federal Government.

"We hold both the Muslim leaders of Zamfara State and President Obasanjo responsible should Ms. Daniel come to any harm for being a journalist. The Federal Government and its officers will stand charged of complicity and dereliction of duty should it fail to condemn this *fatwa* imposed on a Nigerian citizen.

Finally, given that Nigeria is now under a permanent state of crisis producing bloodbaths upon bloodbaths, the causes of which flow more directly from the absence of generally accepted *Terms Of The Union* of the federating nationalities, we propose that the convocation of a Sovereign National Conference be declared the primary political objective of the country.

To this end, we call on both Houses of the National Assembly, and all state houses of assembly to, first, pass resolutions for such a declaration, and second, to introduce in the shortest possible time (before the next

presidential election) bills (at the state level) and a bill (at the national level) to set the framework for an SNC whose processes must be complete before 2007.

"We also urge the electorate to use the SNC as the true test of any political ambition or party's manifesto (if they had any) with regard to the forthcoming elections.

Without a country, there would be no politics, religious or otherwise. So let those who aspire to high office first assure us of their commitment to securing the stability and health of the nation they wish to govern".

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Soldiers arrest Sharia scribe over Kaduna riot

By Saxone Akhaine (Kaduna) and< Dadzie> GUARDIAN DEC 2 2002

AMIDST intensified efforts to unmask the masterminds of recent anti-*Miss World* riot in Kaduna and Abuja, soldiers at the weekend arrested the Secretary-General of Supreme Council for Sharia in Nigeria, Malam Nafiu Baba-Ahmed, for alleged complicity in the riot.

The *Sharia* council scribe's arrest came just as Kaduna State government is making a *volte face* on its decision not to institute a judicial inquiry into the mayhem, in which several lives and property worth millions of naira perished.

But apportioning blame for the crises also at the weekend, the Catholic Archbishop of Lagos, Dr. Anthony Olubunmi Okogie, said both Christian and Moslem fanatics should be held responsible for the bloody strife.

The cleric said the only way to avert a reoccurrence of the crises was for "our religious leaders to practise what they preach".

According to family sources at the Gidan Radio Close, Off Rabah Road residence of Baba-Ahmed, he was whisked away by 50 soldiers who came to his house.

Confirming the SCSN's scribe's arrest, his lawyer, Alhaji Ibrahim Umar, expressed fears that the development might engender fresh protests.

Umar remarked that: "It is lamentable and sad to hear that the Secretary-General, Supreme Council for Sharia in Nigeria (SCSN) was molested and arrested yesterday, around 9p.m. at his residence by some military personnel, and taken to unknown destination".

Umar further said that the "unconditional release of Malam Baba-Ahmed is a pre-requisite condition for peace in Nigeria".

But a full-blown judicial probe of the riot, with a view to punishing the masterminds, may be underway as a top source told *The Guardian* that the state government has changed its mind over the decision not to raise a judicial panel.

According to the source: "The state government has done a rethink over its earlier decision not to constitute a judicial panel. Any moment from now, the government will set up the panel to fully investigate the riot and punish those who masterminded it".

The source added: "The government had earlier thought that it was only the newspaper publication that induced the protest that sparked off the problem.

"But from the confession of some of those who were arrested by the police, it is now clear that there are some powerful individuals who instigated what later turned into a politically-motivated protest".

The source argued that the state government had resolved to "punish the masterminds to serve as good precedence in checking any future reoccurrence".

Commenting on the riots, the President of the Civil Rights Congress (CRC), Malam Shehu Sani, cautioned political and religious leaders as well as traditional rulers in the state, to desist from "the use of religion to achieve narrow and selfish political goal".

Sani said, "so far, politicians from Northern Kaduna are in the habit of whipping up Islamic sentiment to win elections," while maintaining the socio-economic and political *status quo* in the state.

He said further: "Politicians from Southern Kaduna are also engaged in the use of Christian sentiment to pursue their agenda for new state creation or power shift".

He urged leaders in the state to help strengthen democracy in the country rather than destroy it.

Sani lamented what he called "the menace of *al Majirai* that roam the streets of Kaduna. "It is a dangerous development to the sustenance of democracy".

"They are at most times front-runners in every sectarian crisis. This ancient educational system must be abolished. Government must resettle, rehabilitate and modernize these institutions".

Malam Sani, however, lamented that "within this year (2002), Kaduna State has witnessed three religious-related violence of minor scale at Kaduna Polytechnic, Federal College of Education Zaria and Federal Government College.

Fielding questions from reporters in Lagos at the weekend, after the commissioning of a refurbished science laboratory block at St. Finbars Secondary School, Okogie said that there are thousands of Moslems that are very good, who practise their religion in the righteous way.

"Then we have these unwanted fanatics; just as we have them in the Christian fold, so do we have them in the Moslem fold who don't just care. Their own is to cause chaos, not only chaos but because they want to steal in order to get what they want.

"They don't just go on rampage, they want to set ablaze; they are not doing it because of religion, they are only using religion as a cover; which is not good".

Okogie praised Sultan Muhammed Maccido of Sokoto for reminding Moslems in the wake of the Kaduna fratricide that the period of *Ramadan* is a time for sober reflection, fasting and prayer.

"How can a devout Moslem go out rampaging, looting people's property under the camouflage of *Ramadan*? It is giving a bad name to religion, like it can happen in the Christian fold".

The Catholic Archbishop, who said he felt like crying when he heard about the Kaduna crisis, said: "The irony of it all is that those who are bad are very vocal because they are disgruntled and self-centred persons. These are the people causing all the trouble we are having".

On the *Fatwa* issued by the Zamfara State Government through its deputy governor, Okogie said: "He (the deputy governor) is using that word wrongly. I don't think the man knows what he is talking about. It shows that he is not versed in the *Koran*. I that am not a Moslem, I know more about that word than he is talking about".

According to Okogie, "*Fatwa* can't be used on this occasion, it is wrong. It shows that they are just disgracing us".

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=====**XXXX** ARTICLES BELOW FROM VANGUARD DEC 6, 2002

Call for tolerance and understanding

By Anayo Okoli

Friday, December 06, 2002

THE mayhem that trailed an alleged blasphemous story in ThisDay newspaper of Saturday, November 16, 2002 has once again brought to question the degree of religious tolerance in a secular nation like Nigeria.

Before too long, violent reactions from Kaduna had escalated to the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, the seat of power. In the end, not less than a hundred protesters and innocent Nigerians lay dead while the Miss World pageant slated December 7, 2002 was hurriedly shifted to London. Nigeria, whose citizen, Agbani Darego, presently occupies the exalted position of Miss World lost the privilege of hosting the finale of the beauty contest.

Nevertheless, victims of the needless rampaging and killings have been given mass burial. Emotions and anger flowed during their burial. Some northern leaders have condemned the act of brigandage by the protesters. General Mohammadu Buhari and Colonel Abubakar Umar, both retired military top brass, in clear terms condemned the act of the urchins and called for their prosecution.

The most heart provoking reaction to the death of victims of the protests was the one given by Zamfara State acting governor, Alhaji Mamuda Aliyu Shinkafi. At a rally in Gusau, he passed *fatwa* (death verdict) on Isioma Daniel, the author of the ThisDay piece. We marvel at the rate at which religious liberty has been misconstrued to mean licence to say and do anything especially when such things are against the constitution, the grundnorm of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Fatwa, an Islamic law proclamation can only be pronounced against a Muslim adherent. Isioma Daniel as a non-muslim could not have been subjected to the ambit of Shariah jurisdiction except she so chooses.

In this case, she has not done that. So, what the Zamfara State acting governor has done is exercising his religious freedom an inch too far. The religious tolerance and endurance of other religious sects in the country should not be mistaken for meekness.

We agree with the federal government's nullification of the *Fatwa* against the ThisDay reporter. Such *Fatwa* pronouncement could not have been anything but a wild goose chase by a religious zealot in a constitutional country.

There is the need to be sensitive to the heterogenous, multi-ethnic and religious secularity of Nigeria by not only the media but other sectors of the country. For that reason, we caution the media, especially ThisDay for the slip that occurred in that controversial report.

However, the newspaper's apologies carried in all Nigerian dailies should be accepted by the Muslims by being merciful especially in this month of Ramadan. The month is that of piety and spiritual regeneration and forgiveness that does not call for the kind of killings that took place in Kaduna and Abuja.

We believe that irrespective of religious inclinations, Nigerians must be able to live together in peace by tolerating and understanding each other.

MANY ARTICLES BELOW ARE FROM GUARDIAN DEC 6, 2002—UNTIL NOTICE BELOW.

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Fanfare as Moslems celebrate Eid-el-fitri

By Kabir Garba Alabi and Rosheedat Tihamiyu

THE teeming Moslem faithfuls in Lagos yesterday joined their counterparts across the country in celebration of *Eid-el-Fitri* amidst festivity and glorification of Allah (SWT).

The 30 days Ramadan period, during which Moslems underwent spiritual exercise of abandoning food, drinks, merry-making and other mundane activities came to an end on Tuesday and Wednesday as some Moslems observed their *Eid-el-Fitri* on Wednesday while others did the same yesterday.

Although, the feast was supposed to be performed on a uniform day, the difference was occasioned by the disparity in the date of the commencement of Ramadan fast about 30 days ago.

Indeed, the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs had issued a directive for a common date. Some Moslems began their fasting on Tuesday, November 5 while others started the following day.

For the former group, the number of their fasting days as at last Tuesday, December 3 was 29, which automatically guaranteed them to break their fast on Wednesday when the new moon of Shahawal was reported to have been sighted.

The latter group performed their own *Eid-I-Fitri* celebration yesterday as their fast also reached 29 on Wednesday. And majority of Moslems in Lagos State fall within this category.

The difference notwithstanding, the spiritual essence of the fundamental principle in Islam has been producing the desired results if the pronouncements from many Islamic leaders are anything to go by.

"This occasion calls for renewed faith and genuine commitment to the cause of Almighty God," said Sheykh Robiu Adebayo in his sermon during the *Eid-I-Fitri* prayer observed in Oworonsoki, Lagos.

Apart from *Zakaat-I-Fitri*, an alms giving that is directly associated with Ramadan fast, Sheykh Robiu digressed to speak on publics and other issues.

To the youths, he admonished that they should not allow themselves to be used as political thurgery to foment troubles and perpetrate diabolic acts.

"Please, you should eschew evil and do not serve as instruments for politicians to perpetrate evil. Remember that whosoever participate in the killing of people, will not go unpunished. Islam, categorically forbids killing and shedding of blood which is now rampant in our society.

"Yet, there is no reason Moslems will tolerate any act of blasphemy against the personality of any prophet of Allah. This is not limited to Prophet Muhammed alone, even Prophet Isa (Jesus), Moslems hold him in high esteem and we are bold and ready to declare war against anybody that attempt to impugn the character of these holy personalities," remarked Adebayo while making a reference to the Kaduna riot recently.

He prayed for the nation and world over while he urged leaders at all levels - religion, government and others - to shoulder their responsibilities with the fear of God and justice to humanity.

To Moslems especially Sheykh Robiu wants them to embrace the lessons of Ramadan wholeheartedly and surrender themselves to the dictates of Allah completely.

Similar issue was addressed by Alhaji Abdullai Akinbode, the chief missioner of Nasirul-Lahi-il-Fathi Society of Nigeria (NASFAT) at the old Lagos State Secretariat Mosque where the organisation observed prayers yesterday.

He called on Moslems to enter into the fold of Islam and observe its injunction perfectly.

"Today, non-Moslems always read Islam through the character and conduct of Moslems. That is why when any Moslem misbehave, the conclusion always that that is what the religion teaches," noted Akinbode.

In his sermon, he gave thanks to Allah for a successful completion of the Ramadan fast and extolling His attributes, "it is essential that we emphasise on the character of Moslems of this generation."

Making a reference to chapter six of the Holy Quran on what qualifies one as a Muslim, Alhaji Akinbode said, the world today is full of deception from the nucleus, national, states and even across the global village.

He, therefore, called the attention of believers to submit to God's will which qualifies them as Moslems. For, according to him, one can be a Moslem and still be wrapped in the garment of hypocrisy, deception, lies except those that follow the word of Allah sincerely.

Explaining further, he said those who are rightly guarded are those not wrapped in the garment of deception and hypocrisy.

As for those who invent lies against Allah and His Apostles, practice hypocrisy, Allah said he will lead them to enjoy the reward of their acts in this world. However, when it is time for Allah to take their souls, they will die in painful torment and thereafter dwell in hell fire for ever , he said.

Speaking further, Akinbode implored Moslems to be good ambassadors of Islam, emphasising that faithfulness and sincerity should be the hallmark of their mundane and spiritual activities.

Akinbode warned that Allah forbids shameful, discord, disharmony and transgression admonishing that every Moslem should follow the teaching of Islam. He stressed that Islam should be better understood even by non-Moslems.

Since Ramadan fast is a mechanism of body and soul cleansing, Akinbode urged Moslems to be steadfast and always rely on God for all their needs and wants.

To Imam Mohammed Jamiu, Alubarika Central Mosque, Igbihin-Adun, Mushin/Ilasamaja, Lagos, the celebration of *Eid-l-Fitri* is an indication that Islam has an answer to every aspect of human life.

He urged moslems to be tolerance and magnanimous, as the earth is meant for humanity to live, irrespective of cultural, religious and social background.

But what is gratifying about the celebration this year is the fact that prices of food items are not affected. Most of the foodstuff still maintain their prices except rice. A visit to various markets in Lagos, indicate a little hike in prices of foodstuff. But items such as: tomatoes, pepper, onion, gari, yam flour, yam tubers, are still within the reach of common people.

However, most of the Moslem leaders expressed gratitude to Lagos State government for declaring Thursday and Friday as public holidays.

Particularly, Sheykh Robiu Adebayo remarked that the action shows that the government has feeling for its citizens. And he prayed that God should continue to guide all the leaders.

The concern of most Moslems is however the need to maintain the high level of spiritual activities that permeated the entire world. The question on the lips of most adherents is therefore, after Ramadan, what next?

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Group calls prayers for the nation

AS part of efforts to find solution to the nation's crisis, a Christian group, African Charismatic Ministers Association International will hold a 3-day fasting and prayers for peace, economic and political stability at the church auditorium of the Redeemed pillar of fire praying Mission

Incorporated No.5 Redeemed Pillar of Fire Avenue, off Osolo Way, Isolo, Lagos from Monday, December 9 till Wednesday, 11 from 10 am to 2 pm.

According to the statement signed by the group's president, Rev. (Dr.) Adol Paul Obinwaogu, "Although, God graciously delivered the nation from many years of obnoxious military dictatorship and misrule, the country from visible indication is still passing through heavy negative spiritual bombardments under manipulations."

The group, therefore advocated capital punishment for those who are involved in causing violence. He added: "what we need in Nigeria is religious tolerance, fear of God maturity in faith and strict adherence to the various religious tenets. Nigeria belongs to all of us. Let us live in peace. We need each other."

The national prayer co-ordinator is Apostle Emma K. Osajioke and Rev. Mike Ofoegbu is the guest speaker while Pastor Akin Rotimi will be the speaker.

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Miss World: Matters arising

By *Bobson Gbinije* GUARDIAN 6, 2002

THE most exhaustive anatomisation of the Nigerian Nation cannot unravel the diaphameity inherent in its socio-economic, religious and political matrix and structure. Nigeria is a mystery nation where nothing works. It is jinxed, cursed, anathematised, damned and now completely bedevilled, because of its execrable inability to host the World Beauty Pageant and do anything right. In the midst of oil wealth we remain one of the poorest countries in the world and incarnadined in corruption. Nigeria's political Armageddon must be now or never, unless we agree to sit down and discuss the viability and functionality of the cumbersome Lugardian albatross of 1914 that led to the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates.

Our co-existence as one Nation is now questionable. It is now a misalliance sunken in volatility. Ever since the second coming of President Obasanjo he has tried to pursue the Nigerian agenda with Spartan equanimity in the face of deliberate and prodigious opposition by the political dog-in-a manger mafia. At great personal risk and criticism he has made so many overseas trips to mend fences and launder our pariah image precipitated by the maximum despot Sani Abacha, 419ers, corruption, greed, political head hunters, arsonists, life liquidationists, political crooks, erudite legal prestidigitators, killing of Ken Saro Wiwa and religious extremism etc.

Our almost irreparably bad image was now gaining a polished and acceptable look in the comity of nations. We were accepted back into the Commonwealth etc. The Lord Gardener's dictum that "Absolute purity has no fear over political and social slander and this it must conquer in the end" became prevalent. Nigerian businessmen were now filling the credibility gap in our reputation. With democracy in place and procedural propriety injected into our body politick investors were now coming back to Nigeria. It is the trail of integrity that brought the Miss World Beauty Pageant to Nigeria. But the so-called sensational, irresponsible, denigrating, offensive and provocative publication in *ThisDay* newspaper that stimulated the ghoulish mayhem in Kaduna and Abuja has taken Nigerian from a pariah nation to a gehenic outcast nation. It is not the interest of this writer to adjudicate or pass judgement on this matter, but it is imperative to make some observations to forestall a repeat in the future.

Right from day one individual Moslems and its collectivity arrowhead made statements to the effect that the morality and timing of the beauty pageant is wrong, since it falls within the ambit of the Ramadan calendar. The Organisers and the First Lady Mrs Stella Obasanjo reacted by

moving the date forward. We still heard some commentaries from Moslem leaders in outright condemnation of the Beauty Pageant. There was therefore the mindset of 'Suspended Anger'. The so-called offensive publication of *ThisDay* newspaper created an avenue and conduit for venting the 'Suspended Anger'. I do not intend to obstruct the trajectory of my submission with sentimental and prejudicial projectiles. But I believe that two wrongs cannot make a right and the Islamic scholar Alhaji Ibn Mohammed Shehu asserted in his book entitled *Islam And The Dynamics Of Change* that "Islam is a religion fundamentally foundationed on the rubrics of peace, love and tolerance". The reaction of the Kaduna Islamic fundamentalists (Tijaniya, Quadariya, Sunai and Chiite Moslem brotherhoods), was like a tragedy waiting to happen and they made no effort to stall it. They committed the fallacy of "*PETITIO PRINCIPI*" a logical fallacy in which a premise is assumed to be true without warrant or in which what is to be proved is implicitly taken for granted. The catalogue of woes which Moslems and non-Moslems have suffered in Nigeria has now brought to the fore the imperative of creating a forum to determine the existence of Nigeria as one nation. We cannot, for goodness sake, continue like this.

The political implications are far-reaching and the 2003 elections are around the corner. Will these religious prejudices and regular violence not truncate our march to 2003? Can Christians and Moslems ever co-exist? Will it not be wise to break Nigeria or do we evolutionarily metamorphose to political adulthood? But who will pay the price? How do we salvage Nigeria's tarnished image again in the international arena? How do we re-orientate our people to love Nigeria and love one another? How about our children and our own future? Is there hope for Nigeria? Will the World beauty pageant ever come back to Nigeria? and what will the negative campaign against Nigeria's hosting of the Pageant by the British press do to us? The time has come and it is now for Nigerian Christians to rise up to the challenges of Islamic fundamentalism resulting in wanton decimation of Christian lives. Christians cannot continue to 'turn the other cheek' and live in pusillanimous tergiversation in the midst of such un-Allah-like and un-Godly-like attacks. The Christian Association of Nigerian (CAN) must set in motion a long period of complete re-strategisation and not empty placebos on ground. The Christian religion will be completely wiped out of Nigeria and nay the world in the new millennium if Christians continue to fold their arms. They must evangelise aggressivity to change the world from a state of demonic aggressivity to a state of Christ-like discourse to entrench peace.

Finally, the *ThisDay* newspaper must develop a sense of occasion by ensuring that there are enough foolproof reading of its publications before rushing to press. But the remorseful and repentant stance of *ThisDay* newspaper' after the holocaust must be accepted by the Supreme Council Of Islamic Affairs (SCIA) and the entire Moslem Nation. The Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) must stand by the *ThisDay* newspaper in this dire-strait psychological moment. Enough is enough. Moslems must forgive *ThisDay* newspaper. Those who have an unweanable tendency to sow mischief, who are hiding behind all these evil acts should know, that their sins will find them out. The poet and philosopher Seneca said, "As long as you live, keep learning how to live" (*Quemadmodum vivas, quamdiu vivas*).

Gbinije lives in Warri

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GUARDIAN DEC 6 2002

Path to a viable polity, by Adesanya, others

By Yinka Aderibigbe

FOR the nation's political top-notchers and the literati, there was a fresh opportunity yesterday to examine the problems of the polity. It was at the launch of *Bulletin from the land of the living*

ghosts written by erudite literary scholar and social commentator, Prof. Adebayo Williams, at the Lagos Airport Hotel, Ikeja.

A common thread that ran through the speeches of *Afenifere* leader, Chief Abraham Adesanya and Williams among others on the occasion, was the need for a national conference to enable all ethnic nationalities renegotiate the terms of their co-existence.

To Adesanya, a common bond among those who are obsessed with the relegation of the collective interest of the nation to the background, is their opposition to a sovereign national conference.

As he put it: "The true enemies of Nigeria are those who passionately oppose and do not want us to re-examine the basis of our existence."

Adesanya, who chaired the occasion, noted that the recent mayhem in some parts of Kaduna State and Abuja over the *Miss World* pageant were part of the signs that for the nation to continue, it must be urgently restructured.

Said he: "That a secular show and a comment in a secular newspaper could lead to that level of carnage and mind-boggling blood-letting by Northern Moslems against Christians is a reflection of other unresolved questions."

Contending that such an action was nothing but "a political action" of a section of the country against others, Adesanya said time might be fast running out to achieve a peaceful dialogue on the Nigerian question.

He said: "The many years of predatory activities of political and economic locusts have turned Nigeria into a land of the living ghosts," a land where many of the fertile brains, are exiting in droves, leaving the nation's intellectual space famished.

Adesanya canvassed regional autonomy in a loose federation as the only solution to the country's problems.

Said he: "There is urgent need for regional autonomy so that each region would be at liberty to pursue those objectives that are dear to it without federal let or hinderance. Those who want to continue to run Nigeria as a unitary state must be told in clear terms that they are running against time."

Williams on his part, said Nigerians should be allowed to freely discuss the future of the country. According to him, the country is already a failed state in need of dire rejuvenation and that if no forum is provided for the discussion of the polity, then "there is nothing bad if the union is thrown into the trash can."

The newspaper columnist said the nation was witnessing a deepening "economic misery and criminalisation of the Nigerian political class all of which are showing classic definitions of a failed state."

He further said: "Today, we have statesmen in a collapsed state, and nationalists in a receding nation."

The nation's major headache, he continued, stemmed from the fact that an ethnic nationality believed it could force its own values and ways of life down the throats of others, a reality he said, had been expressed by the many crises that had bedevilled the polity.

He said the nation had been in crisis and would continue to be until it rediscovered itself and made proper plans to restructure.

Citing the death of Gen. Sani Abacha and how the nation was saved from the brinks, Williams admitted that unlike other countries in the world, Nigerians had always enjoyed divine intervention, which offered a temporary relief before the hawks would get back to work.

Speaking about the circumstances which led him to write the book, Williams said that the prevalence of violence in the nation and the self-inflicted injuries on the unity of the nation, were fertile grounds for his intellectual wondering to ferment.

The reviewer of the book, the Managing Director, Daily Times Plc, Dr. Onukaba Adinoyi-Ojo, described it "as an engaging fictional account of the crises of post-colonial Nigeria and the ugly sides of its self-appointed military messiahs."

The highlight of the occasion was when the Ogun State Governor, Segun Osoba, recommended the author, Williams, for a senatorial seat in Osun State as a way of bringing him back to the country.

The governor had bought N2.5 million copies of the book for all secondary schools in Ogun State.

Over N5 million was realised at the launch. Williams said that he would use the proceed to mass produce the local edition of the book so that average Nigerians would have the opportunity of reliving the horrors of military dictatorship in the country.

Among others present on the occasion were Chief Great Ogboru, the Managing Director, *The Guardian*, Mr. Eluem Emeka Izeze, Mr. Bayo Onanuga of *The News* magazine, Mr. Dare Babarinsa of *Tell* magazine, Mr. Kayode Soyinka, publisher, *Africa Today* magazine and Mr. Wale Babalakin (SAN).

Others were the wife of the autho

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GUARDIAN DECE 6, 2002

Markafi, Senate Whip canvass religious tolerance

From Saxone Akhaine (Kaduna) and Ayoyinka Olagoke (Lagos)

THE rigours of Ramadan fasting and Eid-el-fitr celebration that follows it have great lessons to be learnt by Kaduna residents, who were recently subjected to a mayhem, which claimed over 200 lives and property worth several millions of naira.

This was the Sallah message of the Kaduna State Governor, Alhaji Ahmed Makarfi, to citizens of the state who joined millions of other Nigerian Moslems to celebrate this year's Sallah.

The Senate Chief Whip, Adawari Pepple, also called on Nigerians, even as they celebrate sallah, to reflect soberly on the socio-economic and political situations in the country.

To the Kaduna residents, Markafi said: "We should bear in mind and internalise the lessons, which the rigous of Ramadan teaches us: Piety, equity, discipline, truthfulness, charity, justice and fairness to all."

According to him, the immediate past unpleasant experiences of the people, occasioned by the anti-*Miss World* violent protest, should make them to resolve to always eschew violence, pointing

out that this should "transform our relationship into an exemplary cosmopolitan state with harmony, peace, love for one another as God intended for the state."

The governor urged the people of the state to be law-abiding, assuring them of government's commitment to the continued socio-economic development of the state with a view to creating conducive environment for individual to pursue their legitimate economic and social goals.

The Senior Special Assistant (Media and Publicity) to the Governor, Mallam Mukhtar Sirajo, in a statement, said that the security council of the state headed by Makarfi held an extra-ordinary meeting, where the situation in Kaduna was further reviewed.

"The council has, therefore, decided that the curfew relaxed two days ago, be further reduced. Consequently, the curfew is now going to run between 12 midnight and 6. 00 a.m., till further notice."

Sirajo remarked that "people are advised to comply with the curfew period and continue to be calm, peaceful and law-abiding as more measures are being put to ensure their safety and that of their property".

Pepple, in a statement issued yesterday, said that the fasting and prayers of the Ramadan period were veritable sacrificial instruments of stocktaking and purgation of all emotions, capable of hindering the spirit of brotherhood needed for nation-building.

He urged Moslems to re-dedicate themselves to the onerous task of building a virile and united country that is free from hate and all divisive tendencies.

The senator maintained that people of all religious inclinations in Nigeria had a sacred-duty to ensure that all citizens co-habitate and interact freely with one another in any part of the country they find themselves.

While calling on people of different faiths to maintain and preach peace in all their dealings, he expressed concern and regrets over the death of hundreds of people in the recent Kaduna riots.

"We must learn to be patient and rise above ethnic, religious and political differences and work together as a people with a common fate and destiny".

In Lagos, the Chief Imam of Amukoko, Alhaji Burahimo Bida, urged Nigerians to embrace God and be more prayerful.

Bida urged the rich in the nation to give "Zakat", which is sacrificial offering to the poor, to alleviate poverty in the land.

He urged those in corridors of power to distribute the wealth of the country among the people.

The Chief Imam also urged Moslems not to go back to sinful characters, which they left during the fasting period, but remained God-fearing.

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CAN won't tolerate more killings of Christians, says Mbang

By Paul Onomuakpokpo Guardian Dec 6 2002

APPALLED at the whirl of anti-Miss World protests that swept through some parts of the country recently, the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) yesterday stated its resolve to break the cycle of killings of Christians and the destruction of their churches and other property by Northern Moslems.

To the apex association of Christians in the country, the disturbances are deplorable not only because they triggered off a colossal losses of lives and property, but also on account of robbing the country the opportunity to showcase its culture and other tourist attractions to the international community.

President of CAN, Dr. Sunday Mbang disclosed the position of the association in Lagos yesterday during a press conference on the Kaduna and Abuja riots and some activities lined up by the body in the next few weeks.

Saying that the riots had made a sovereign national conference imperative, Mbang noted: "Nigerian Christians are completely disgusted with the seemingly insatiable desire by some misguided Moslem brothers to take lives and destroy property at the slightest excuse. We no longer want to turn the other cheek."

"We Christians will no longer fold our arms while our brethren in any part of the country are being killed," he added.

Mbang urged all Christians in the country to close ranks irrespective of denominations and be at alert for the sake of defending their faith.

Alleging fears of Christians, he stated: "As leaders of the faith, we assure our brethren of our determination to do everything within our power to prevent this avoidable, unnecessary and unprovoked losses of lives and property. Enough is enough!"

The CAN leader, who urged the Federal Government to be alive to its responsibilities of protecting lives and property, also asked Christians to defend their churches, other property and loved ones.

Asked by journalists how Christians would defend themselves in the light of the Biblical injunction that they should turn the other cheek to their persecutors, Mbang said that such a measure would not be made public now.

He added that Christians in the country were monitoring the trial of the suspects arrested over the riots.

Asked to propose measures the government could adopt to check religious riots, the cleric said that he was not in government and that those in authority should know better how to handle such crises.

Mbang recalled that on June 5, he made public, at the site of the All Christian Ecumenical Worship Centre, the resolve of all Christian leaders to ensure that "this symbol of Christian unity in Abuja is completed within the shortest time possible".

According to him, since that pronouncement, work has started in earnest and Christians are trusting that God will continue to use them to complete the work.

CAN, he added, had endorsed several approaches that were being followed to mobilise the needed funds. He listed these measures as: the CAN Sunday collections, donation folders and contribution vouchers, called Ecumenical Vouchers.

The CAN leadership, at its recent meeting in Enugu, fully endorsed these Ecumenical Vouchers in N100 denomination as an effective instrument through which funds would be raised.

He urged Christians to contribute, through these vouchers which, according to him, are available in every church and other sales outlets.

In addition to the Ecumenical Vouchers, CAN had earlier sent folders to some highly placed individuals in the society soliciting assistance.

The recipients of this donation instrument include all the ministers, all governors, all senators and the Office of the President.

These vouchers, according to Mbang, will be launched in Lagos on December 17 at Chapel of Light, IPM Road, Alausa, Ikeja at 12 p.m.

It will, however, be preceded by an interdenominational service, where CAN will ask God to answer the following prayers:

- divine wisdom for leaders, especially at this crucial period of the nation's life;
- quick recovery of those who were hurt during the disturbances in Kaduna and Abuja;
- repose of the souls of those who died during those riots; and
- God to grant the relatives of the dead and injured the fortitude to bear the losses.

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Catholic Church urges acceptance of diversity in faith

By Joy Oseha GUARDIAN DEC 6, 2002

RELIGIOUS tolerance, predicated on recognition of the diversity of faith amongst people of the world, coupled with education, are the best ways peace can be maintained in the world, according to the Vatican yesterday.

In a message to Moslems all over the world on the occasion of the Eid-El-Fitr, the Holy See stressed the need for peace in the trouble spots around the world, adding that the Catholic Church frowned at "situations where war had prevailed like an open wound in the heart of humanity".

The message delivered by Archbishop Michael Fitzgerald, president, Pontifical Council for International Dialogue, lamented the conflicts in the Middle-East, Africa and Asia.

The message, with the theme "Christians and Moslems and the Way of Peace", noted that while the ultimate causes of war were well known, it nonetheless emphasised the need to "explore ways to peace".

In the message sent through Archbishop of Lagos, Dr. Anthony Olubunmi Okogie, the Holy See recalled the Day of Prayer for Peace at Assisi in January this year by representatives of different religions, adding that religion has an important role to play "in bringing about peace and maintaining it."

Noting that the civil society and governments had been recognising the roles of religion in peace making, the message also stressed the need for "education for peace" and recognition and "acceptance of diversity".

According to the message: "The origin of the causes of conflicts is often to be located in hearts, which refuse to be open to God".

In his own message, the Archbishop of Lagos, Dr. Anthony Olubunmi Okogie called for religious tolerance and understanding of other people's point of view.

This, according to him, was necessary for confidence building, trust, goodwill and harmonious co-existence.

In the message made available by Rev. Fr. Gabriel Osu, Director of Social Communications, Lagos Archdiocese, Archbishop Okogie stressed that great danger lay ahead if religious intolerance and disharmony persisted in the relationship between adherents of the different religions in the country.

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GUARDIAN DEC 6, 2002

Group pledges to expose sponsors of Kaduna riots

From Saxone Akhaine, Kaduna

A Northern youth group, Civil Rights Congress (CRC), has pledged to assist the Federal Government expose the sponsors of the recent violent protests in Kaduna, even as they canvassed capital punishment for those convicted.

Its president, Malam Shehu Sani, who spoke in Kaduna yesterday, hinted that the group had resolved to set up an independent investigation team to trace those who sponsored the riots.

He said it would make its report known to the Federal Government so that the people behind it would be brought to book.

Sani, therefore, called for capital punishment on individuals or group leaders behind the incident.

The northern youth leader said that the mandate of the committee was first to go the suburbs and find out "who killed and who was responsible for the killing of who."

"We also want to find out the extent of involvement of groups and highly placed individuals within religious circles that are involved in this massacre and we also want to know the level of involvement of security agencies, and why they were so relaxed until the protest that started the crisis got out of hand," he added.

He expressed the group's dissatisfaction with the manner the state government was handling the violence, stressing that "each time there is crisis in Kaduna, people have always been arrested and released later."

"And sometimes, most of those arrested are not really the people on the ground when the offence was committed, and the people behind the riots are not normally arrested. But this time around, we have resolved to expose them and recommend them for severe punishment by the Federal Government," he stated.

But the police in Kaduna have reiterated their determination to track down those behind the crisis.

The Police Public Relations Officer, Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), Mustapha Abubakar remarked that "as a follow-up action, some prime suspects and their alleged sponsors, including Alhaji Nafiu Baba-Ahmed were arrested and are being interrogated for suspected complicity."

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BELOW IS FROM PREVIOUS VISIT
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Suspects in Kaduna riot face trial today GUARDIAN 25 NOV 2002

From Saxone Akhaine (Kaduna), Martins Oloja (Abuja) and Alex Olise (Lagos)

ABOUT 1,000 persons arrested by the police in the thick of the four-day violence that devastated Kaduna last week, are to be arraigned in court today.

Their immediate prosecution may have been prompted by the position of the Kaduna State government that a judicial commission of inquiry into the crisis was unnecessary.

In a broadcast at the weekend, Governor Ahmed Mohammed Makarfi said the violence had nothing to do with religion and ethnicity but the action of those who do not want peace in the state.

Some of the suspects were paraded at the weekend at an open field in the Nigerian Defence Academy (NDA) where they are being interrogated.

Also in Abuja, about 100 persons have been arrested in connection with the riots, which spread to the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) on Friday.

The Inspector-General of Police, Mr. Tafa Balogun, has equally ordered the deployment of more anti-riot policemen to some flash points in the North.

But Makarfi, who sued for peace in his broadcast, said the state will not leave any stone unturned in bringing the culprits to book.

The protests were sparked off by Moslem youths in Kaduna on Wednesday over Nigeria's hosting of the *Miss World* pageant and an alleged blasphemous article in a national daily.

Several of the accused persons had various degree of injuries from gunshots, matchet cuts and such other harmful objects. They were placed under heavy security.

Makarfi said the government would not inaugurate a commission of inquiry, but insisted that "those who will be involved shall be punished according to the law".

"We are left with no option but to take a very much more decisive action against perpetrators of crisis and the dastardly acts", he declared.

The governor pointed out that "religion or ethnicity has nothing to do with the violence but rather it is the intention of the perpetrators to turn it to a wider conflict and if we had given in to their desire, they would have succeeded.

"We must all fight these people through a resistance to violence. And the authorities have been fully mandated to take punitive measures to deal with the situation. Also, all those arrested either for murder, theft, and arson will be charged to court on Monday" (today), Makarfi disclosed.

He added: "We shall deal with individuals as they were caught committing any offence, and such shall be done no matter how highly placed the individual maybe."

Meanwhile, the sermon in most churches in Kaduna metropolis yesterday centred on peaceful co-existence.

At the Living Faith Church, the Presiding Bishop, David Abioye, enjoined Christians in the state to be law abiding. He also urged the government to embark on policies that will alleviate poverty, which is the root of the violence.

The All Nigeria Peoples Party's (ANPP) chieftain, Alhaji Umaru Shinkafi who spoke with *The Guardian*, warned: "We must be wary of accusing politicians of having exploited the crisis in Kaduna."

"This is because even though one heard around here in Kaduna attempt to symbolise the protest against the personality of the incumbent state governor, Alhaji Makarfi, I don't think any generalisation of politicians having something to do with the protest is justified," he argued.

Shinkafi said what was justifiable is the cumulative consequences of the type of governance we have, in leaving unemployed people on the streets.

A renowned Islamic scholar, Sheikh Dahiru Bauchi, in reaction to the crisis condemned the action of moslems who attacked and killed Christians that knew nothing about the blasphemous publication.

"They should be regarded as transgressors."

"Moslems should have sued (ThisDay and the writer of the article rather than attack innocent Christians. Those who carried out that attack at this period of Ramadan cannot be regarded as true moslems," he stressed.

Besides, a Northern group, the Civil Rights Congress (CRC), has said: "We unambiguously condemn the resort to violence that has brought about lawlessness and disorder in the process."

Its Secretary General, Malam Nasiru Abbas, observed that "the steps taken by the government and security agents were too belated.

"If action was taken earlier, many lives could have been saved", he asserted.

Speaking on the security checks put in place, Force Public Relations Officer, Chris Olakpe, a Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), explained that there are more police presence in the entire northern states, especially Abuja and Kaduna where the riots were fiercest.

He said military personnel had been dispatched to the trouble spots to complement the anti-riot police efforts.

The police spokesman also denied reports that sophisticated weapons like AK47 rifles were freely used during the riots.

"The police have not recovered any firearm, we didn't see any gun from those arrested so far," he said A source in Abuja traced the genesis of the protest to a lawyer in Abuja who leaked offensive publication to a Moslem leader in Kaduna.

He said: "An Abuja-based lawyer had early in the week put a call through to a Moslem leader in Kaduna, drawing his attention to the publication. The lawyer's intention was not to cause any havoc but to explore the possibility of instituting a legal action against the newspaper. He suggested a libel suit to the Kaduna leader. The lawyer was expected to meet the source in Kaduna to perfect the strategies for the libel by mid-week.

"But trouble began when the Kaduna contact leaked the deal to some clerics who took up the issue and before the lawyer could reach Kaduna for the legal battle strategies, the situation had got out of hand," he alleged.

Unofficial source claimed that close to 200 people may have died in the violence, according to *BBC* news.

Another 215 bodies had allegedly been counted on the streets and in mortuaries while others were thought to have been buried by their families, Nigeria Red Cross Society's President, Emmanuel Ijewere, was quoted as saying.

The beauty queens, who had spent 10 days attending preliminary events in Cross River State arrived in London on Sunday aboard a chartered plane.

They expressed relief at having escaped the violence.

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Nnamani seeks dialogue over Kaduna crisis

From Lawrence Njoku, Enugu GUARDIAN NOV 25, 2002

ENUGU State Governor Chimaroke Nnamani at the weekend, asked Nigerians to imbibe dialogue in resolving the recent crisis in Kaduna which claimed lives and property.

Nnamani said that dialogue was likely to achieve more results than violence and reprisal attacks.

The governor, who spoke in a state-wide broadcast to the people of the state over the disturbances in Kaduna, warned that the Enugu State government would not accept violence and unguarded utterances.

His words: "We believe that if we all accept dialogue and debate, we are likely to achieve more results than would have been offered by violence. We appeal to all persons of responsible leadership to accept the reality of our plurality and so apply their reaction to issues".

"If indeed we elect to be one, we must strive, however painful, to consider the intricacies of managing the variety of our cultures and feelings which in the end, will prove our readiness to live side by side".

The governor added that though he had not received the entire details of the unpleasant activities in Kaduna, he was deeply pained by the development, adding that some of the victims might be of Enugu extraction.

Warning however that the government would not condone reactions which could be interpreted as "retaliatory", he said such actions would not serve any useful purpose to the state.

"The lives and property of citizens anywhere in Nigeria ought to, and indeed, are guaranteed, but where a citizen flees Kaduna and decides to be in Enugu, we guarantee his or her security and right of peaceful co-existence. We will always pride ourselves in the degree of civilisation, which holds the life of a human being so dear and irrevocably sanctified", the governor assured.

Asking other states to take their cue from Enugu as a state with the culture of accommodation, Nnamani said that when this is done, it will boost the economy of the country.

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Nigerians deplore riots, lament shift in *Miss World Contest* to London GUARDIAN NOV 25, 2002

From Paul Oloko (Port Harcourt), Mike Osunde (Benin), Charles Ogugbuaja (Owerri) and Bode Ayodele (Lagos)

MORE condemnation yesterday trailed the riots in Kaduna and Abuja, which claimed scores of lives, even as the father of reigning Miss World, Mr. Darego, expressed sadness at the shifting of the competition to London.

The pageant was moved from Nigeria to the British capital, following a two-day riot that gripped part of the North, including Abuja, the seat of power.

Lamenting the disruption and eventual shifting of the competition to a new venue, Darego, who spoke with *The Guardian* at the Civic Centre, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, declared: "I am sad. I feel bad, very bad."

Agbani Darego and her father had arrived at the Civic Centre, venue for the scheduled Miss World Ethnic Fashion show, which was cancelled due to the shifting of the venue to London.

Also shocked by the cancellation, the acting Director of Tourism in River State, Soraki Davies also expressed disappointment over the cancellation of Nigeria's hosting right for the pageant.

Darego said that he was shocked when he received the news.

"I always tune the *BBC* and just this morning, I was shocked when I heard the news that the organisers were cancelling the hosting of the event in Abuja, Nigeria. I am not happy," he said.

Darego said that Nigeria might not have such an opportunity again in this generation.

The civic centre on Mosco Road was heavily decorated as the beauty queens' arrival was being awaited.

But a poll of sorrow fell on the centre and its vicinity, as the news of the cancellation spread.

Some well-dressed youths were seen removing the red carpets, chairs and some beautiful art works, which would have been exhibited during the show.

About five armed policemen were on hand to guard the centre, while some people who did not believe the news of the cancellation, came to the centre to see things for themselves.

One of them, Mr. Osgu Bestman lamented the cancellation.

"We the people of Rivers State are not happy at all. This is the worst thing that had ever happened to Rivers State," Bestman said.

According to him, Nigeria will never forget this in a hurry. It is very embarrassing, if it is true that the event has been cancelled.

Mrs. Mercy Okpu, a caterer on Mosco Road, who has her restaurant close to the Civic Centre, said she incurred heavy loses occasioned by the cancellation of fashion show.

"Oga, this is too bad. Look at the rice and plenty of food I had prepared for sale, all are now spoilt. Who will buy them again. This would have been an opportunity for people like me to make small money. So you can imagine what Nigeria will have to lose," she said.

Speaking on the *Cable News Network (CNN)*, Miss Marianne Kariujki, who is the current Miss Kenya, said the violent crisis generated by the international pageant made the contestants to feel guilty.

Also speaking on the issue, the Director-General of the Nigerian Television Authority, Mr. Ben Murray Bruce, said the shift in venue would be a great loss to Nigeria.

Miss Kenya, who described the violence in Kaduna and Abuja as very sad, said that she and her colleagues were made to feel that they were responsible for the violence.

"We felt so guilty," she said.

As a pre-emptive measure following the Kaduna riots, the Imo State Police Command has beefed up security in the Ama Hausa a Hausa community in the state.

Stern looking policemen were seen positioned yesterday at the strategic points in the area, located at the New Market axis of Douglas Road.

Routine patrols of the street were carried out by the siren-blasting policemen who were armed to the teeth.

Speaking with *The Guardian*, the State Police Public Relations Officer, Mr. Chinedu Oko, a superintendent of police (SP), said the Police's action was informed by the need to avert reprisal.

In Benin, Edo State capital, the Nigerian Baptist Convention, condemned the killings in Kaduna.

General Secretary of the Convention, Dr. Solomon A. Ishola, made the condemnation even as he described the killing of innocent souls as barbaric.

"Someone, somewhere certainly has failed to do his job," said Ishola.

He said that it was possible for security agents to have infiltrated the ranks of the religious fanatics and nip the riot in the bud.

"I am quite disappointed at the failure of security agents to forestall what happened in Abuja because they ought to have known that what happened in Kaduna could easily have spread to other northern cities," he said.

Also yesterday, the International Press Centre (IPC), Lagos has condemned the arrest of Mr. Simon Kolawole, Editor, *Saturday ThisDay* by men of the State Security Service in Abuja, last weekend.

From the account of the newspaper, Mr. Kolawole was held following reactions to a report in the newspaper over the botched Miss World contest, which allegedly offended Moslems' sensibilities.

According to co-ordinator of the Centre, Mr. Lanre Arogundade, Kolawole was invited for questioning over the publication but was not allowed to return to work by his interrogators.

"IPC condemns the Editor's arrest and detention by the state security agents. Their conduct is too reminiscent of the military era when journalists were arbitrarily harassed and clamped into jail as it suited the whims and caprices of the powers that be," Arogundade said.

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GUARDIAN DEC 9, 2002

Miss World's organisers to seek removal of *Fatwa* on journalist

AFTER successfully holding this year's edition of its beauty pageant, the Britain-based *Miss World* organisation is now set to work towards upturning the *Fatwa* or religious edict passed on Isioma Daniel of *Thisday* newspaper. An article written by Daniel in *Thisday* triggered anti-*Miss World* protests in the northern parts of the country last month.

The head of the *Miss World* organisation, Julia Morley, spoke to *Reuters* in London at the weekend at the end of the contest which saw the emergence of Miss Turkey Azra Akin as the new *Miss World*. Morley said: "My next aim is to ask the Moslems to forgive her in

that area where they rioted. This is the time now to say well, look, don't persecute her. She said sorry, forgive her."

The beauty queens were moved to Britain after an article by Isioma Daniel, a female journalist in her early 20s, touched off Moslem-Christian riots in the northern city of Kaduna that killed more than 200 people. "It was one young journalist who made a sad remark. You have to forgive her," Morley said in an interview at London's Alexandra Palace venue. "The editor has already been arrested". Saturday's show was inevitably overshadowed by the earlier violence in Nigeria. Several beauty queens boycotted the event amid calls from feminists and some politicians for it to be scrapped because of the deaths. "We were not even in the vicinity of the riots. But because *Miss World* was on, it was a natural lock-in, it was too good a headline for the press to let go. I know that we did nothing wrong," Morley stated.

British feminist" long opposed to a competition they say is a sexist "cattle market", protested Saturday's event. No British television station screened it, although 142 other nations around the world did. "It is very much the personal choice of people," Morley said. She said many programmes on British television were "vaguely filthy." "*Miss World* is a family show, it is beautiful fashion, the designs are lovely, it has a scholarship award, it has things which average parents and people want to see," she said. With the swimsuit parade abandoned decades ago, the girls appeared in evening gowns at Saturday's show, although they were all shown frolicking in bikinis in a footage shot in Nigeria.

Morley confirmed that an attempt was made by a Nigerian businesswoman in London's High Court on Friday to freeze *Miss World's* assets over claims that she was owed £500,000 from a charity fund-raising dinner. She said she would be fighting the suit in court today, "The lady tried to take an injunction to stop the show and I think that's a sad and mischievous and ungenerous and ungracious thing for a woman to do," Morley said. She said the half-century old *Miss World* company currently "had no assets" and if she was to win damages from the Nigerian in a counter-claim, "I hope we will make a bit for charity." The British broadcast media on Saturday made good their pledge not to broadcast the *Miss World* pageant originally scheduled for Abuja.

The pageant was not screened by any television station in the United Kingdom. In the midst of threats by some contestants to boycott the event in Nigeria in protest against the death sentence passed on Ms Amina Lawal, the broadcast media announced their decision to shun the pageant ostensibly on the same grounds. Organisers and some Nigerian government officials however, interpreted the decision as an attempt to scuttle the pageant and its expected positive impact on investment and tourism in the country.

When the pageant was shifted to London following the riots that resulted in the death of many people, few analysts expected the media organisations to change their decision due to growing criticisms against the event. The fiasco surrounding the event, especially the article in *ThisDay* newspaper and the riots in Kaduna were however given prominence by the British media, especially the British Broadcasting Organisation (BBC). Information

Minister Prof. Jerry Gana, had said the negative reporting was a conspiracy against Nigeria, while Ben Murray-Bruce, Director General of the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), described it as "racism and stereo-typed journalism against Africa and the blackman.

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VANGUARD DEC 10, 2002

American Notes (11) The desert encroaches

Chuks Iloegbunam

VANGUARD *Tuesday, December 10, 2002*

The *Washington Post* of November 24 published an article on Nigeria by staff writer David Finkel. Titled Crime and Holy Punishment, it reviewed the implementation of sharia in some of the northern states that have supplanted the nation's penal system with the Islamic legal code. Mr. Finkel also played the census expert. Nigeria, he wrote, was a country of 130 million people made up of 65 million Muslims and 50 million Christians. This is the sort of arrant nonsense with which the Western media daily assails our sensibilities.

In a March 2002 paper titled Islam and Democratic Federalism in Nigeria, Professor John Paden stated that "The common wisdom – based on previous census data – is that the population of about 120 million is approximately 50 percent Muslim, 40 percent Christian, and 10 percent explicitly 'traditional'". Paden's shameless bias should not surprise. The man authored Sir Ahmadu Bello's biography. As someone who lived in Nigeria from during the colonial days, a vaunted expert on the country, Paden knows that British-organised censuses before independence were no more than guesstimates. He knows that the 1962 Census led to litigations and was put aside for the even more contentious 1963 census. He knows that Sir Adetokunbo Ademola, the chairman of General Yakubu Gowon's 1972 census pronounced the exercise a fraud. He knows that General Murtala Muhammed cancelled the figures the day he succeeded Gowon. Paden knows that General Ibrahim Babangida's 1991 headcount was a national swindle, discountenanced even by the United Nations.

Ibrahim Babangida's census did not ask for ethnic and religious identities. Yet our distinguished Professor Paden allowed his "common wisdom" to be based on thrash. It is on this mountain of sawdust that laughable population figures have been allocated to ethnic and religious groups in Nigeria. No one has asked any of Paden, The *Washington Post*, the VOA and the BBC and other such insensitive ventilators of disreputable figures why Nigerian statistics should be based on bias, conjecture and outright falsehood while Western countries conduct

accurate and scientific censuses of their entities every decade.

Of course, the aim is always obvious. It was important to allocate unsubstantiated figures in order to sell the claim that Nigeria was Islamic and mostly Hausa/Fulani. If you visit Internet websites that claim authority on Nigeria, you will be shocked to see the scandalous population figures allocated to various ethnic groups. It was easy to disseminate these falsehoods because northern soldiers and the clique that propel them appropriated national political authority for upwards of 25 years and misused that authority while those who should have checked the excesses scrambled for crumbs.

This one no be say na go come because the facts are there. When General Ibrahim Babangida smuggled Nigeria into the Organisation of Islamic countries (OIC) in 1986, all his divisional commanders were Christians, and a majority of his Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC) was Christian, including the Defence and Internal Affairs Ministers. Yet they allowed the injustice to stand. How would Nigerian Muslims have reacted if General Domkat Bali had been Head of State and used the position to smuggle Nigeria into an Organisation of Catholic Countries? Only one person, Commodore Okoh Ebitu Ukiwe, refused to be intimidated. He told the world that the AFRC neither discussed nor approved Nigeria's membership of the OIC. It cost him the position of Chief of General Staff (CGS) and so what? Today, Ukiwe holds his head up high. But those who busied themselves with primitive accumulation at the cost of injustice must now realise that whatever they gorged and are gorging themselves with is connected to an end that runs with waste, probably the decomposing bodies of their offspring and anticipated generations.

Everyone seems relieved that the Nigerian Muslim leadership has discountenanced the so-called fatwa pronounced on Isioma Daniel by the Zamfara Deputy Governor, posing as an ayatollah, and his irresponsible bandwagon. But few have bothered to properly analyse the implication of the disownment text by the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (SCIA). Still, the issue must be addressed. The statement against the Zamfara Ayatollah's fatwa told the "Muslim Ummah that the only body that can issue fatwa is the Jamaatu Nasril Islam and the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (SCIA), both of which are being headed by His Eminence, the Sultan of Sokoto and the recognised spiritual leader of the Muslims in the country."

In other words, the SCIA's bother is not the propriety or otherwise of fatwas but the issuing quarters. That is declaring to people that any Nigerian, whatever their religion or non-religion, could be sentenced to death at the instance of a committee convoked and headed by Alhaji

Maccido. Does this not contradict the assurances given at the onset of the sharia rash that the legal system was for Muslims alone? Does this not suggest that, contrary to what we were all led to believe, Nigeria is not a democracy but a theocracy at the head of which is, not Chief Olusegun Obasanjo but the Sultan of Sokoto? Does this not point to Sokoto, instead of Abuja, as the nation's political capital? Does it not all begin to explain why our born again Christian who claims national political mandate refers every sneeze and every cough to the Caliphate for adjudication?

There was to be a beauty pageant in Abuja. Well before the mayhem that eventually torpedoed the project, Muslim leaders were all over the place warning that it must not hold in Nigeria. If presumption has not taken centre stage, if there still was any iota of consideration for peoples of others faiths and peoples of no faith at all, why should those opposed to a beauty contest not shut their TVs or switch channels, why should they not turn their attention elsewhere? Why must their satisfaction in a plural society be tied to the outright dissatisfaction of other legitimate sections of the polity? Were we not told that there was no coercion in religion and that sharia was strictly for Muslims alone?

What is happening in Nigeria today simply indicates that, very soon, any zealot that feels like it would protest the sight of a television newscaster wearing the crucifix and order his or her stoppage. And our born again Christian will acquiesce. It means that the large corpus of writings by Achebe and Soyinka could be subjected to fresh assessment by any zealot and, on that basis, two of the world's best writers could be "banned" from returning to their country of birth! They said that sharia was for Muslims alone, but shut down the businesses of non-Muslim citizens who sold alcohol. Yet, those bound for paradise have yet to discontinue collecting the VAT that accrues from sinful boozers. Very soon women who turn out in trousers in Abuja will be liable for flogging, all in the name of one Nigeria.

The ayatollah of Zamfara knows that his state does not contribute one kobo to Nigeria. Nonetheless he happily collects every month anything between N600m and N1bn from Federal Government allocation. This is money straight from oil wells some of which are located in Isioma Daniel's state. But the ayatollah, can sit and order the murder of Isioma after abject and fulsome apologies from her employers and long after numerous calls for restraint by the SCIA. This points to danger that this fellow poses to society. Is the witch doctor a specialist in inflicting cholera on victims because he hung his own anus in the trees? Is it presumed that those who orchestrate the killing of some other person's daughter, for whatever reason, will have the affronted bereaved roll out the red carpet to celebrate the sauntering of their own daughters through

the highways and byways of Nigeria?

Nigeria's problem is the refusal to face the truth. Do people who claim to be in God's service require the tools of lies? Does the Almighty require the lies of his own creatures in order to maintain and sustain His supremacy and sovereignty over time, space and everything? For Nigeria to survive, we really must oppose all forms of injustice and violence. Sir Ahmadu Bello governed Northern Nigeria without imposing criminal sharia on the region. Were politicians of the calibre and character of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe and Chief Obafemi Awolowo still around, Nigeria may never have come to this explosive pass. The country needs considerate and tolerant people in government, not religious fanatics and hypocrites. One way to search for genuine leaders is by applying the vote wisely during 2003. The electorate should repudiate zealots and anti-national conference and anti-true federalism candidates.

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THIS ARTICLE NOT YET CHECKED FOR THE ARTICLE ON MW
GUARDIAN DEC 10, 2002

Fanatics, bandits and the failure of state

By George Ehusani

IN the midst of widespread protestation from many level headed Nigerians, and at the consternation of the international community, a fundamentalist ill-wind has continued to blow through the Northern States of Nigeria like a devastating cyclone, consuming lives and property and aggravating the general state of distress in the land. The latest mayhem in November 2002 once again devastated Kaduna, and shockingly extended to Abuja, the nation's capital, which we thought was the last bastion of neutrality in matters of religion and ethnicity. Abuja, our symbol of unity, has lost its innocence. Abuja, the melting pot of Nigeria, has been violated by bandits and fanatics!

The perpetrators of this crime in Kaduna and Abuja last month claimed that they were venting their anger over the botched Miss World Competition in Nigeria, and the unholy comment of a journalist in *This Day* Newspaper against the person of the holy prophet Muhammed. And in spite of passionate pleas for forgiveness by the Newspaper management, the fanatics went to town to avenge the alleged offence on all non-Muslim Nigerians and their properties! It sounds incredible, but why else were Churches razed and Christians killed in Kaduna? Why else will cars and shops belonging to non-Muslims destroyed in Abuja? Is it the Christian Association of Nigeria that sponsored the Miss World Competition? Or does *This Day* Newspaper belong to the Catholic Archbishop of Kaduna?

Since February 2000, Sharia-related violent riots during which hundreds of lives are lost, and churches, shops, cars and houses belonging to Christians and Southerners are burnt, have become a regular feature in Kaduna, Kano, Jos, Zaria and Bauchi, where a large

population of Christians live alongside Muslims. But what we have been witnessing in Nigeria in the last few years, is actually the failure of state and the collapse of governance. There is nothing on the ground to demonstrate that ours is not a land run over by political bandits, ethnic warlords and religious fanatics. The average citizen now seems to have lost confidence in the capacity of those in power to protect lives and property.

Where one part of the country can decide to enforce criminal elements of the Islamic legal code that are clearly at variance with the nation's constitution, cutting off the limbs of petty offenders, condemning poor adulterers to death by stoning, and harassing those who do not share their faith every so often, the impression created is that no one is in charge of our affairs, and there is no law and order in place.

With a selfless, visionary and prudent leadership, the thousands of deaths we have recorded, and the millions of Naira worth of property that have been destroyed in the last few years, could have been avoided. I hold the current leadership of the Nigerian State responsible for the massive destruction of lives and property in Kaduna, Jos, Kano, Zaria, Bauchi and elsewhere, over the Sharia controversy, and at the hands of Islamic fundamentalists, because the president and his team have remained indolent and insensitive in the face of a very explosive situation. I hold President Obasanjo and his team accountable for the blood and tears in Kaduna and other parts of the North, where non-Muslims have lost their right to live in peace, for it is the primary duty of government to protect innocent and law abiding citizens from the nefarious activities of hooligans, bandits and fanatics. I hold those in power responsible for the pain and anguish that is the lot of the innocent citizens of Northern Nigeria who for the umpteenth time have been rendered refugees in their own country, because I expect them to own up to their ineptitude and resign from their high office, if their being in office makes no difference for the internal security of the nation.

True, after three and a half years in government, the present crop of leaders have done little to improve the lot of Nigerians. The economy remains comatose in a country that is otherwise abundantly blessed by the creator. Unemployment, especially youth unemployment, has soared, as a result of which the mass of our young people are losing hope and losing patience. Our schools, hospitals, and other social infrastructure are in an embarrassing state of decay. The population itself is more divided today than it ever was, since the end of 1967-1970 civil war. And now religious violence has been added to our multiple woes. Yet in the midst of all these calamities, our leaders are carrying on business as usual.

Our public office holders are feeding fat on our scarce resources, selling the poor for a pair of sandals and playing games with the fate and fortune of our children. There are allegations and counter allegations of bribery, running into hundreds of millions of Naira, and involving high-ranking members of the legislature and the executive. Young Nigerians have become angry, restive and violence prone. They are capitalising on anything they can find to vent their anger. Yesterday it was ethnicity. Today it is religion. Tomorrow it may be political affiliation. And there are politicians who fan these flames

of violence for their own selfish political advantage. But where does all these leave Nigeria?

In the midst of the madness of today peace-seeking Nigerians and civil society groups must begin to take the elected representatives of the people to task with regard to their commitment or otherwise to creating the enabling environment for peace and social well-being. The saner elements in our society must begin to take the president, the governors, the local government chairmen and the lawmakers at all levels to task on their capacity or otherwise to formulate and defend such legal instruments and pursue such policies that will make for peace, security and prosperity.

It is not enough for us to desire peace for our land. We must be peace makers as well. We must be committed to designing strategies to forestall, manage and resolve conflict situations. We must work hard and make sacrifices towards the attainment of the peace of our dream. The men and women of goodwill in Nigeria must constantly be on the watch to ensure that in our evolving democracy, such agents of destabilisation as the gang of Islamic fanatics in the North and their collaborators elsewhere do not hijack our commonweal for selfish political gains, and transform our land to a theatre of war, a war with no discernible reason and one without frontiers.

In the midst of the madness of today those who still have their heads in place must reflect together and rise up in defence of the secular nature of our national constitution, or else Nigeria may soon become another Algeria. A stitch in time saves nine they say. This latest event in the tragic drama of the Nigerian state is one more reason why it is necessary to hold a round table or a national conference to discuss the terms of our social contract as a nation... We must salvage our country for once from the hands of bandits, hooligans and fanatics. The time to act is now!

Rev Fr. George is Secretary-General of the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria.

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VANGUARD DEC 11 2002

Blackout mars Soyinka's outing at National Theatre

*By Mcphilips Nwachukwu
Wednesday, December 11, 2002*

LAGOS—ODIA Ofeimum's lips hung in mid-sentence; his elucidating articulation aborted. The microphone went dead. Darkness in all its fury descended. A deep hush steals across the hall. Frustrated hisses bring no remedy. Management of the National Arts Theatre had made no alternative arrangement to counter NEPA's naughtiness. It had no working generator.

The god of iron which Professor Wole Soyinka has so honored in many of his landmark works paid him no regards. *Ogun* must have been on leave, or otherwise engaged for its brother, the god of darkness, *Sango* gave our own Nobel laureate a gut ruttin uppercut. *Kongi*, speechless and sad, could only manifest a deep seated frown, allowing for a moment anger to take residence in his boyish visage. Only God could say in what language the professor must have rained curses, inwardly, on this public disgrace of an institution at the public presentation of his latest collection of poems: *Samarkand and other markets I have known*. A million thoughts must have flashed through his mind. What can one really take for granted in this shore? A wasted generation just paid its most famous member in bad coins. Everyone felt humiliated on his behalf. This became more so with the international press wondering wide eyed how an auspicious occasion as the presentation of yet another epoch work by the only Nobel on this shore could meet with so much frustration. Jesus Christ is right, a prophet's is not without honour except in his own country.

When NEPA would not restore light to the hall, a quick decision was taken to relocate the book presentation to an open space under an almond tree in front of Entrance C. Important dignitaries including Mr. Jim Ovia, MD Zenith Bank; Professor Gabriel Olusanya, John Pepper Clark, Professor Femi Osofisan, Prof. Egerton Uvieghara, MrsFrancesca Emmanuel, Mrs Aboyade Cole, Yemi Ogunbiyi, Tunde Fagbenle, Mrs Ademolo Adenubi, Chief Tunde Oloyede, Odia Ofeimum, the book reviewer amongst others had to personally carry their chairs along to the open space. Only people like Tayo Akpata and others who arrived late, were the lucky ones. As it turned out, the sole beneficiary of the NEPA mishap was the giant almond tree which was thereafter christened: *Samankand*, after the title of the collection of poems.

In apparent response to the state of the nation in the past few weeks, Africa's first Nobel Laureate, Professor Wole Soyinka, yesterday, described current religious uprising and *fatwa* imposed on *ThisDay* Newspaper reporter, Isioma Daniel, as usual, saying it was an attempt by religious hegemonists to dominate others in the polity.

The renowned poet playwright speaking in Lagos at the public presentation of his latest book: *Samarkand and other markets I have known*, said recent killings in Kaduna were part of a larger agenda of Northern hegemonists to dominate other federating units of the nation, wearing the garb of religion. The playwright argued that religion had become an instrument of oppression appropriated by certain section of the country to dominate and infringe on the rights of others in Nigeria's plural state.

According to him, the Kaduna violence has an extension of the

murderous killing of Gideon Akaluka during the Abacha era by religious fundamentalists. His word: "The murderous tendency we are seeing today is not new. It is pronounced over and over again. Remember Gideon Akaluka. He was killed under Abacha's regime. He was not tried under any law. People chased him into the police station and dragged him out and beheaded him."

Gideon Akaluka, an Igbo businessman, was killed in Kano in 1996 by religious fundamentalists following allegations of defiling the *Koran*. According to Soyinka, this act of senseless killing and non respect for human life amounts to disregard for humility, intolerance and the will to dominate others in the guise of religion. He said: "I have been writing to warn on the phenomenal rise and signs of intolerance, insensitivity to dominate others with religion as an excuse. I have no patience with beghorts, those who think they hold the way and the truth... those who cannot hold the ideals that hold us together as a nation."

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GUARDIAN DEC 29 2002

Still On The Botched Miss World Contest

Nelson Isibor

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Yes indeed it's another sad day for us in Nigeria. It goes a long way to show how we can "live" with our differences in Nigeria. If you ask me, I will tell you that THISDAY Newspaper played into the hands of these fanatical bandits who call themselves Muslims (I begin to wonder what brand of Islam this set of people practise), because if that offending article had not being published, these fanatics would not have had an excuse to riot, they had been waiting for an opportunity and they cashed in this.

Come to think of the negative publicity this has generated for the country, for close to three days now Nigeria was on the headlines of CNN, BBC and other international news networks, not for good but for negative events. If you will agree with me, Nigeria is always on the news ONLY when some thing negative happens in our country.

The intention of the organisers for bringing the competition to Nigeria was to help improve our image abroad but all that has been defeated now. This whole shameful episode has put a very big question mark on our reputation. As your paper rightly

reported, the British tabloid, The SUN had been waging a campaign of calumny against Nigeria. I doubt if Nigeria would be able to host any international event with this development. It just pleases me that the head of the Miss World Organisation Mrs Julia Morley said that "Nigeria is not negative as the international media painted Nigeria to be" Coming to Editors, this whole event should teach all Editors that negligence could lead to something far beyond their wildest imaginations. We can see how something written by a single person has cost many innocent people their lives.

I sincerely pity Nigerians who have invested heavily in organising this pageant. Well I just hope that Nigerians should learn the sooner we live with each other and respect other peoples differences the better for us and our collective reputation as a country.

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ARTICLES OF RESPONSE

WWW.GAMJI.COM JAN-FEB 2003

[Rejoinder: The Anatomy of Miss World By Dr. Jan H. Boer.](#)
By Dr. Sani Aminu (GAMJI)

The Muslims believe in Prophet Isah (Jesus), though not as the son of God. The Muslims are even allowed to eat from the from the slaughters and foods of the Christians except for pork and alcohol. The root cause of distrust between Muslims and Christians is actually historical and it started with wave of genocides by the Crusaders from Western Europe (sent by the Popes) for many centuries.

Rejoinder: The Anatomy of Miss World By Dr. Jan H. Boer By Dr. Sani Aminu

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The analysis by Dr. Boer of the recent violent clashes following the recent Miss World contest in Nigeria was shallow and myopic. In his introduction, he wondered how could an innocuous tradition provoke so much hostility and blood shed. I am surprised that despite leaving in Africa for 30 years, this theologian didn't realise that a beauty contest is not an African tradition at all and more over, no amount of provocation or propaganda will make a good Muslim or a good Christian accept this show of nudity and shame. Africans have a variety of beautiful traditions that have spiritual and cultural meanings.

His narration of Christian/Muslim relationship as well as history of Northern Nigeria was too clumsy. He was wrong to write that Islam regards its relationship with others as one of permanent war. In reality, the relationship between Islam and Christianity started right from the declaration of Islam by

the Prophet Muhammad (May Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Dr. Boer should know that one of the relatives of Khadija, Prophet Muhammad's first wife, was a Christian. Some Muslims took refuge in Ethiopia to escape persecution from pagans in Arabia. Ethiopians practice African Christianity.

The Bishops of Jerusalem (Orthodox Christians) and other cities in the holy land invited Muslims under Caliph Umar to come and liberate them from Roman Christians who colonised and levied them heavy taxes. Till this day, Muslims are the keepers of keys to some Cathedrals in the holy land. It is also of interest to know that when the Bishop of Jerusalem offered Caliph Umar to enter his Cathedral and perform his prayers, he (Umar) declined. His reason was that, he didn't want any person after him to claim the cathedral just because he (Umar) has prayed there. Such was the extent of trust that existed between the Muslims and the Christians. The same happened in Egypt. Furthermore, Islam taught the Muslims to regard the Christians and Ahlik Kitab (people of the book). The Muslims believe in Prophet Isah (Jesus), though not as the son of God. The Muslims are even allowed to eat from the from the slaughters and foods of the Christians except for pork and alcohol.

The root cause of distrust between Muslims and Christians is actually historical and it started with wave of genocides by the Crusaders from Western Europe (sent by the Popes) for many centuries. It was only when the Crusaders were defeated by General Salahuddin Al Ayyubi, a Kurd from present day Iraq, that their genocides ceased.

I would like Dr. Boer to answer the following questions so that we can know which religious group is keen on using planned and organised conflicts to achieve its interests, between Islam and Christianity based on the following historical facts.

1. Who exterminated Aboriginal Australian and American Indians in order to occupy their land permanently?
2. Who introduced Apartheid in South Africa and even proselytised the doctrine of Apartheid in the Churches?
3. Who brought the triangular slave trade ?
4. Who colonised the whole world and legitimised exploitation?
5. Who caused WW1, WW2, fascism, holocaust and there after legitimised terrorism of Zionism?
6. Who brought IMF/World Bank that destroys other economies /currencies in order to get cheap raw materials.
7. Who strangulates weaker nations with sanctions so as to increase infant mortality.
8. Who supplies weapons to Africans to kill themselves in exchange for cheap minerals and diamonds.

In terms of Nigeria, the history did not start with the revolution of Shehu Mujaddadi Usman Dan Fodio. Infact Dr. Boer should know that, there were a lot of Medieval kingdoms (Kwararafa, Igalla etc)that flourished in the North

Central region of Nigeria and their influence extended to both the North West and North East regions. There was no need therefore to underestimate the historical importance of the North Central sub region of Nigeria and its people.

The revolution of Shehu Mujaddadi Usman Dan Fodio which was just two hundred years ago was a popular revolution based on Islamic ideology. It gave the Sokoto Caliphate and other kingdoms in present day Northern region of Nigeria one of the best administrative structures which even the colonialist found impressive. Infact the present day states in Northern Nigeria were based on the emirates/provinces of the caliphate.

It was not fair of the writer to dwell only on the recent riot, because the first religious riot that started with the inception of this regime was the massacre of Northerners at Shagamu by members of a traditional cult. The subsequent riots were protest against the introduction of Sharia (all Nigerians knew it is in the constitution) which degenerated in to riots especially in Kaduna. I am surprised that you failed to mention the ethnic clashes in the middle belt in which thousands of people as well as the ethno-religious ones in Plateau and Taraba states where Traders/ Herds men and their families (Muslims) were ethno-religiously cleansed. Their cattle and other properties were destroyed most at times with connivance of state governments and security agents of the federal government.

The reality of the situation is that, the root causes of all those clashes are political and economic failure of governments. Unfortunately instead of the people to confront their governments in order to get their rights, they resort to communal clashes. In some states, government officials, clandestine religious and cult organisations deliberately provoke the riots. Infact, majority of Muslims and Christians interact peacefully daily not only at formal but at personal levels.

In terms of outside religious influences most people trusted the Irish missionaries in the past, but most people don't trust missionaries from imperialistic and arrogant nations these days. In the words of Professor Ali Mazrui they brought GOD in exchange for GLORY and GOLD. The revolution of Ayatollah Ruhollah Musavi Khomeini in Iran had awakened Nigeria Muslims to the fact that it was possible to throw away the yoke of colonialism and imperialism and be fully independent.

In conclusion, the Miss world contest in Abuja was abhorrent to Muslims and the subsequent blasphemy by Isioma Daniel was deliberately planned to provoke conflict for the political benefit of some people who wanted to divide the North along religious lines. The aim was to divert attention of the nation and the whole world from the economic problems due to massive financial corruption going on currently in the nation. They planners also wanted people to vote for unpopular candidates just because they belong to the same religious group. They would never succeed in this wicked venture.

Sharia has been in Nigeria for a long time, it is in the constitution and It has also pre-dated colonialism. The people requested it from their leaders. The implementation can be made better than what is obtained at the moment. The most objective way of deciding its impact is for one to go and compare the security situation in states that implement Sharia and those that don't implement it.

Yours faithfully,
Dr. Sani Aminu
UK

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WWW.GAMJI.COM FEB 2003

Limiting the Havoc of Friday Rioters: A Rejoinder to Abdulrazaque Bello-Barkindo.

By Ihas Idriess

(GAMJI)

Nigeria is never united in condemning the US, which is for the simple reason that our Christian brothers are always of the believe that whatever is condemn by the Moslems is Christian. This mentality is so broad among our Christians friends that even their educated leaders do feel and advocate so, though only in public. Privately they confess to supporting our stand. Take for example during the recent Miss World saga, when the whole Moslem community of the country is condemning the hosting, the Presidency has the guts to host the beauty queens to a special service in state house church where they are proclaim daughter of the church. This I think is worthy of condemnation not our protest over America bombarding of Afghanistan without any justification.

Limiting the Havoc of Friday Rioters: A Rejoinder to Abdulrazaque Bello-Barkindo

By Ihas Idriess

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I read with a lot of admiration and respect for my God friend (Mr. Abdulrazaque Bello-Barkindo who sometimes this year introduced me to this site), I always enjoy reading his writings and most of the time I can't help but to agree in totality with his write up. By God I love and respect his excellent command of English, the manner and way in which he plays with words and handle English will certainly impress even the Queen of England or even Salman Rushdie, whose book was once judge the greatest book, for it's mastery of the English Language.

I will have loved not to join issues with such a guru in English, I will have loved to argue my point in Fulfulde, but I can't help it, I have to use the language Razaque knows and master over the years to disagree with him on

the above subject matter. Lulu (as he is known in our circle) write on topics with so much passion and expertise that even his staunchest critic will not have ground to argue, even if he could not be convince about the issue in question, but when I read my good friend saying in his article as above "*the north, especially northern Moslem are becoming increasingly synonymous with anti-American sentiments...*" I can help but to disagree in entirety with his observation, because if my memory serves me right this type of sentiment can only be found during and when America is off track. To buttress his allegation my friend when on to sight an example "*During Operation Desert Storm, street urchins in Kano and other parts and other parts of the north took to the street to protest against the US*". If we all can recall sincerely during such protest great people of the north from all walks of life have joined in the peaceful rallies then, in the forefront of those rallies then are the likes of Sheik El-Zajzaky who without fear of contradiction can not be labeled urchin even by Bushes of the Washington. I think it was a worthy stand for the people of the North to have stand up for what then, the world over is believed to have been the height of injustice, aggression and flagrant abuse of power, which was condemn by great people of the world, like Nelson Mandela, Rev. Jessy Jackson, and so on. It is a known fact today that America is the most hated nation not only amongst Moslems but among all people who love freedom and equality.

Nigeria is never united in condemning the US, which is for the simple reason that our Christian brothers are always of the believe that whatever is condemn by the Moslems is Christian. This mentality is so broad among our Christians friends that even their educated leaders do feel and advocate so, though only in public. Privately they confess to supporting our stand. Take for example during the recent Miss World saga, when the whole Moslem community of the country is condemning the hosting, the Presidency has the guts to host the beauty queens to a special service in state house church where they are proclaim daughter of the church. This I think is worthy of condemnation not our protest over America bombarding of Afghanistan without any justification.

The staunchest opposition to America against its policies is from its citizen, and the greatest rallies against America are from the West. Hear my friend again "*they neither know who they are rioting against or why...*" my friend may wish to note that today the average northern Moslem can afford to own and maintain a radio receiver which you find as their intimate companion of all times, they may be poor, they may be hungry but they are informed, so when they protest against America, they have ground for such an action.

In the eloquently written article what strikes me the most is "... *if they were educated, they will summarily depart...*" I wonder is it only the educated that can go out of the country???... it is a condition that you must be educated to travel?? I want to believe million people who can not even read or write have traveled far and wide more that my friend can ever dream of traveling and many who are much more educated than he his yet are in the country and

have not bothered to go out. And is it only the uneducated that protests??.... What of the millions of people we see on our television protesting against America, are they all uneducated or illiterates. I believe it is only the informed and bold minds, that can detect and stand up and put their lives on the line against injustice meted out to others, billions of miles away from our homes.

The northern Moslem may be dressed in imi's of American designer labels like he rightly pointed out, but will never compromise any injustice meted out on our mothers, fathers and children anywhere in the world.... I don't know, may be my friend have forgotten or does not know the Prophet (PBUH) tradition which states that we are all one and are brothers keepers. So injustice meted on a Moslem sister in South Africa, Japan or anywhere in the world is injustice to all. As much as I agree with respected my friend that *children are our most prized possession*, I equally believe that the earlier they know the dangers and evils of learning and depending on the handout from the west the better. We should be proud of our heritage, which is Islam, and make our youth grow with Islamic standing, and with the knowledge that whenever a Muslim uttered or write the holy name of our Prophet he will follow it immediately with (PBUH) and when Allah is mentioned, verbally or otherwise (SWT) is ideal to follow. The West may be a land of horny and milk to many it is also the land of the dead to so many and Allah (SWT) will never be pissed-off by our striving to follow the saying and tradition of the Prophet (PBUH), but rather he will continue to be pissed-off by those who turn blind eyes when his brother is at the receiving end and even prefer side with the aggressors, that to me is COWARDICE. And we are proud to stand together with our brothers anywhere in the world.

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