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Beaten to death and thrown in a well

By Ben Brown in Kaduna

Kaduna is a city that stinks of death.

Many corpses have been thrown into mass graves, but some still have not been buried.

We were shown one body down a well. His name was Ardo, a father of two, killed as he tried to run for his life.

It all started when Christians set off on a march through Kaduna last week. A local cameraman captured the fatal demonstration on film.

They were protesting against Muslims who want to bring in strict Sharia law, the Islamic code of justice.

The march turned violent, with vicious clashes erupting between Christians and Muslims. Entire districts of the city were set on fire. People were burned alive.



Before the carnage: Christians protest against Sharia

Overwhelmed

No-one knows exactly how many people were killed in Kaduna. Most estimates put the figure at more than 1,000 dead.

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This was slaughter on a savage scale. It has led to fears the violence could destabilise Nigeria and its new democratic government.

We saw the survivors - alive, but only just. Many have terrible burns. Some are suffering from gunshot wounds. Others were attacked with machetes, swords, even bows and arrows.

The local hospital cannot cope. It has dealt with so many casualties that it is running out of antibiotics, bandages and drips.



Yacoub aged 12: Set alight by the mob

In one ward we found a little boy who had been knocked down by the mob and covered in dry grass which was set on fire.

He is only 12 years old - as far as the mob was concerned, he was old enough to die.

His name is Yacoubu Hudu - a Muslim attacked by Christians, but in Kaduna, there are victims like this on both sides.

We do not know exactly who started the orgy of violence here.

What we do know is that it ended with Christians and Muslims alike hunting each other down and murdering each other in cold blood.

Killing zone

Kaduna is among the biggest cities in the whole of Nigeria, but for three solid days last week it turned into one vast killing zone.

It is now totally devastated. It looks like it is just been through a war.

In one area, where virtually every home and business has been burnt down, we found 15-year-old Mohammed looking for the body of his father.

"A mob shot my dad," he says. "Then, as he attempted to escape, they finished him off with machetes."

Next door, a woman called Halima told me her husband too was butchered.

He had tried to warn her and the children to run, she says, but youths put a tyre round his neck and set fire to him.

She says she is too traumatised to look after her baby and wants someone else to take it.

Catastrophic danger

The army has poured into Kaduna to restore the peace, but ordinary people are still pouring out, salvaging what they can and leaving town.



"We are Christians. They are killing us for nothing"

They are terrified Kaduna's killing spree may not be over yet.

"We want to go. We are Christians in this house," a women told me. "They don't ask for anything, they are just killing us for nothing."

As she and many others flee, Nigeria is holding its breath.

The violence here has already spread, but if it ignites a whole new wave of communal killing, the results in this, the most populated nation in Africa, could be truly catastrophic.



People are leaving in fear of more violence

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