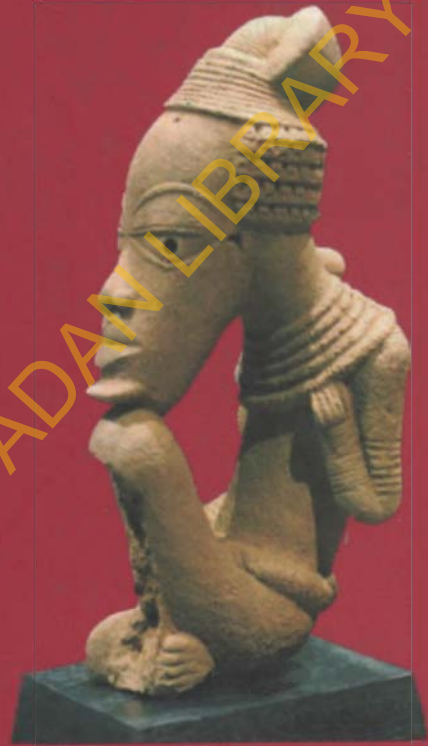


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Editorial Comments

African Notes is still a unique forum for Africanist discourse and construct. The journal remains platform for expressing cultural ideas in intellectual context and it is still widespread all over the globe. It has ever been intellectual in scope and standard.

Nothing spectacular has changed in the house style of the journal. Even though there was a mix-up in the covers of about three past volumes, there has been a "welcome back" to the original conception of the cover with artistic representation of African symbolic artworks. This is notable in this current edition.

Logistics problems threatened regular and continuous "outing" and "outreach" of *African Notes* to our readers and subscribers alike. The Editorial Board wishes to impress on all that the problems have been solved and all the backlogs of *African Notes* are published with renewed vigour, vitality and heightened hope.

African Notes vol.31, nos 1 and 2, 2007 is already in press. The Editorial Board wishes to express gratitude to our readers and subscribers for their patience thus far. It is, indeed, a unique "welcome back".

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Urban Violence in Kano, 1999-2001: The Yoruba Experience

Rasheed O. Olaniyi, PhD
*Department of History,
University of Ibadan, Ibadan
Nigeria*

Introduction

Historical analysis reveals that the relationship between migrant and host communities shift over time. In the pre-colonial era, inter-group relations to a large extent were marked extent by courtesy and cordiality. In many societies, immigrants were accorded status of being the guests of rulers because of the viable social and economic roles they performed. Thus, land grant to migrant communities was a common feature of African inter-group relations. Similarly, examples of integration and assimilation of slaves, traders, warriors and clerical communities as indigenous kinship groups abound in Africa.

In contrast, the imposition of colonial rule and economy distorted this pattern of inter-ethnic relations in Africa. To be specific, colonial economy and urbanisation induced the migration of new migrants to the cities with the objective of exploiting the economic opportunities. The new comers were thus considered 'aliens' or 'native

aliens' who stood on the margin of the society. In order to achieve its "divide and rule" agenda, the British colonial authorities established segregated quarters for the native 'aliens' or strangers. By this, the process of identity formation, ethnic boundaries and hostilities rather than integration among communities in Nigeria evolved. Thus, ethnic tensions arising from commercial rivalry, control over resources and political differences were the hallmarks of migrant and host relations in Nigeria. For example, Igbo communities were attacked in Jos in 1932 and again in 1945, these were true in Lagos in 1948 and Kano in 1953.

Since May 1999, when a democratic government was instituted in Nigeria, several violent communal, ethnic and religious conflicts have been recorded: Ife-Modakeke, Yoruba-Ijaw, Hausa-Igbo and the Sharia riots. In many instances, participating in the killing of other ethnic groups has been conceived as an extension of one's solidarity and

loyalty to the community. Consequently, the conflicts weakened the soul of the Nigerian nation.

Ethnic relations in the post-independent Nigeria are inseparable from the resources of the state and the tools of political power, which control and allocate these resources. The ethnic tension between the Hausa and Yoruba was further aggravated by the annulment of the June 12th, 1993 presidential election popularly won by M.K.O Abiola. The Yoruba felt politically dominated and alienated. The tragic consequence of these events was ethnic conflicts between the Hausa and Yoruba particularly in Lagos and Ogun State.

In the current phase of economic globalisation, urban and ethnic violence have mutated into new forms both in scale and dimension. It is characterised by a blurring of the lines between war, organised crime and large-scale human rights violations, these new wars exhibit new modalities, which distinguishes them from earlier conflicts. In terms of combatants, the process of globalisation has widened the number and type of participants (Jackson 2002:29-52). Sam Egwu offers a critical analysis of how globalisation the forces of, characterised by neoliberal market reforms and political liberalisation, produced social shocks among communities in Nigeria (Egwu 1998).

The excruciating economic and social distress created by the trend of Structural Adjustment Programme transformed the patterns of inter-ethnic relations in a plural society. Communal groups who had cohabited peacefully and in complementarity turned arch-rivals and their relationship became marked by violence and unprecedented nihilism. The host communities consider migrants in their midst as exploiters and competitors who constitute a stumbling block to their social and economic ascendancy? For example, the visitation of the *Oro* ritualist? (from the host traditional base) to Sabo Sagamu (Hausa migrant enclave) was a way of

emphasising legitimate ownership of the entire Sagamu area by the indigenes. This was largely borne out of resentment over the domination of the Petroleum trade in Sagamu by Hausa oil dealers (Tijjani 2000:9).

At the forefront of urban violence are ethnic militias, specialised security services, semi-mercenary units, and militant religious groups, warlords and criminal gangs. At the centre of all these are youths who perpetrate urban violence against migrant groups and other social minorities. Examples are Oodua Peoples Congress (OPC) in the Southwest, and the "terror of urban Kano," *Yandaba* and other criminal gangs. The Oodua People's Congress was formed on August, 29, 1994 as a socio-cultural organisation and pressure group. The OPC's agenda/mission is to defend, to protect and promote the interest of the Yoruba people. The cardinal agenda of the organisation is to redress the perceived marginalisation of the Yoruba in the Nigerian Polity (*Africa Today*, Feb. 2000:24).

To what extent does the author agree with this submission? It is on record that the OPC waged action on "highwaymen" and members usually to an oath that forbids them from dispossessing people of their valuables.

On October 28, 1999, no fewer than 12 people were killed and properties worth millions of Naira destroyed when OPC members and Ijaw youths had a confrontation at Ajegunle, Lagos. On 18 July 1999, Oro festival ritualists visited Sabo area of Sagamu and killed an Hausa woman. The Hausa community in Sagamu protested via their leader to the Akarigbo of Remoland. But the issues degenerated into deeper violence. Hausa community in Sagamu was further attacked by the involvement of the OPC. The Sabo Central Mosque was burnt. Many persons were dead and displaced. The Sagamu violence led to reprisal attacks in Kano. On 25 November 1999, OPC 9

clashed with Hausa traders at Mile 12 Market, Kosofe Local Government, Lagos in a contest over the control of revenue and hegemonic claims (*TELL*, Dec. 13, 1999 p. 15; *The Guardian*, December 4, 1999 p. 14; *TELL*, Dec. 13, 1999:16). A similar feature was the July 14, 2000, OPC and Igbo traders clash at Alaba market, Lagos, where more than five people were killed. The aftermath of these attacks on settler communities went beyond the shores of Yorubaland. The consequence of the OPC aggressive onslaught was disastrous for the Yoruba diaspora in northern Nigeria.

In its worst form, the Sagamu and Lagos mayhem threw the whole Yoruba' diaspora communities in Hausaland into panic, dislocation, insecurity of property and economic gains, series of attacks and molestation. For the first time, in the history of the Yoruba migrants in Kano, they were attacked in July 1999. Indeed, the July anti Yoruba riot was ethnically motivated and was directed only against the Yoruba in reprisal for the Sagamu riot.

This is a way that ethnic relations in Nigeria have been characterised by fear of economic domination by immigrants and in some instance by anxiety of exclusion. Peaceful co-existence and tolerance has been eroded by fierce competition and shrinking socio-economic resources. In Kano, the incessant urban violence in Kano been largely attributed to youths, street culture and violent gangsterism (Albert 1997: 285).

Context of Study

As a cosmopolitan city, metropolitan Kano is economically vibrant and socially volatile. These contradictory features characterised the history of ethnic relations in the trajectory of modern Kano. This riff is often perceived as a firm and conservative line of division, but the Kanawa and Yoruba also have a history of peaceful co-existence through cultural contact religion of Islam and inter-marriage. That is, the transition from

peaceful co-existence to mutual fear, and how these trends shape the construction and reconstruction of the ethnic identities. It is important to analyse the underlying factors and the proximate ones that fuel violence, the scale and dimension, perpetrators and peacemakers.

Violent communal conflicts has become a peculiar feature of the democratisation process in contemporary Nigeria. Indeed, the poor state of ethnic relations epitomised by bloody communal conflicts results from the failure of the Nigerian Government to manage proficiently the nation's ethnic plurality (Agbese, 2001:125-148).

The abysmal nature of ethnic relations in Nigeria is, indeed, an aftermath of, several lopsided government policies. The locus of the ethnic violence can be identified from public policies of the Nigerian state. Government policies not only constitute an arena for ethnic struggles, they also accentuate the scope and intensity of ethnic violence. Hence, ethnic and urban violence, arise from institutional disorder and inevitable contradictions of irreconcilable aspirations of different ethnic groups. For example, the post-June 12, 1993 annulment of presidential elections internationally acclaimed to be won by M.K.O. Abiola from Yoruba ethnic origin ushered in its wake, ethnic hatred, rivalry and intolerance between Hausa and Yoruba. The military administration of General Sani Abacha was alleged to have embarked on the ethnic "cleansing" of the Yoruba (tagged pro-June 12) in the economic, civil service and military sectors. The ethnic tension between the Yoruba and Hausa was further aggravated by the death of Abiola in prison. The sum total of these events was the ethnic conflicts between the Yoruba and Hausa in Lagos and Ogun states. Consequently, the history of peaceful co-existence between the two ethnic groups was fractured by deep

discontinuity, especially with the rise of ethnic violence and reprisal attacks. In both cases, the continued treatment of non-indigenes as foreigners has further accentuated the ethnic impasse.

Modern society is increasingly becoming a social movement (Paleg 2000:35). The preponderance of social movements as an influential force that exerts political power moulds and remoulds the nature of contentious politics in the Nigerian democratisation process. Each of the two ethnic groups — Hausa and Yoruba— have decried perceived marginalisation domination. For example, Abraham Adesanya, the Yoruba leader and Chairperson of Afenifere, at various pan-Yoruba conferences in Ibadan advanced the need to review the Nigerian federal system (*TheNews Magazine*, 17, August 1998:27). In a similar vein, some individuals and groups in the north argued that virtually nothing was done by the Federal Government to establish its presence in the north:

... Many Chief Executives of Federal Government parastatals indigenes of Kano State were removed from office during this (Obasanjo's) administration. NEPA, NNPC, NPA and replaced them by Yoruba. (*Thisday*, August 10, 2002 p. 24 and *New Nigeria*, November 20, 2000).

The anarchy experienced in the last decade of the 20th century Nigeria, has seen the explosion of primordial identities violently deployed in the exercise of claim and control over productive resources such as land, market and public institutions. From the soaring rate of urban violence in Nigeria, it is discernible that different kinds of confrontations, forces, interests and strategies are at work.

Each of these parties generates their own set of interests and pressures in a complex interplay of local and external interactions and combatants employed new warfare strategies such as ethnic

cleansing, child soldiers and alleged use of mercenaries. Ethnic activists and political entrepreneurs, operating within groups, reinforce fears, physical insecurity and polarise society. Political memories, myths and emotions also magnify these fears, driving groups further apart. Together, these competing groups strategic interactions produce a toxic brew of distrust and suspicion that have frequently exploded into murderous violence (Lake and Rothchild 1998:3-52).

Much of the urban violence was caused by the fear of the future, lived through the past. Collective fear of the future also arise when states lose their ability to arbitrate between groups or provide credible guarantees of protection for groups, under this atmosphere, characterised by “emerging anarchy of new violence” security becomes of crucial concern. When the central authority declines, the federating groups become fearful for their survival. They invest in and prepare for violence and thereby make actual violence possible. Whether arising systematically out of competition between groups or from extremist factions actively seeking to destroy ethnic peace, state weakness is a necessary precondition for violence to erupt. In this process, conflict between Hausa and Yoruba is largely stimulated by elites who mobilise ethnicity in pursuit of their parochial interest.

Against this backdrop, the current wave of ethnic conflict in urban Nigeria could be attributed to democratisation processes that reinforce the fear among local groups that they would be dominated by immigrants. Ethnic violence is the ultimate form of identification, which becomes all the more urgent in view of the radical uncertainty which globalisation's influx creates about the “true” identity and homogenising trends. Global flows appear to entice the construction of new boundaries

much as the reaffirmation of old ones. In this trend, 'cultural closure' notions of identity may be a central role. Identity is employed by groups in order to create loyal citizens, as much as by groups opposing the state to legitimise claims to alternative forms of allegiance (Geschiera and Meyer 1998:601-615). The pressure of democratisation, including the competing demands for empowerment has produced the alarming rise in ethnic violence.

In Lagos, the youths declared Hausa migrants excommunicated: "*Aafe Mola ni Idi-Araba*" ("We don't want Mola (Hausa people) in Idi-Araba")

These outbursts were largely created by economic competition (*Weekly Trust* April 12-18, 2002:34). In Kano, non-indigenes, particularly Yoruba and Igbo were depicted as usurpers exploiting the Hausa host, by monopolising all the jobs that the hosts were capable of doing or could be trained to do. In addition, southern Nigerian commercial migrants' were accused of acquiring wealth in Kano, preventing the host from making progress and using the wealth generated from Kano to develop their regions of origin through cash remittances by ethnic associations and or individuals (Olaniyi 2001:7).

Criminal gangs including the *Yandaba*, *Yan Bangs* and *Yan Daukar Amarya* operate under the influence of drugs to maim, foot and kill in the period of ethnic, religious and political crises. They are largely organised and armed criminal gangs who constitute an "ethnic army" in conflict situations. Organised groups often moved from their residential areas to other parts of the metropolis to kill, maim and loot. This strategy was frequently employed to avoid being monitored or reprimanded by law enforcement agents, community leaders, parents and neighbours. Other youth gangs include, the *Aimajiri* system and auxiliary street beggars.

From these and other sources, a vast proportion of street gangsters have emerged in Kano who contributes in dramatic ways to the perpetuation of urban violence in Kano,

They often take advantage of any peaceful protest. Most are eager for riots, desire it and prepare for it. Little wonder then, most of the youths who participated in the killings and lootings testified but later regretted their actions, blaming it on unemployment, illiteracy, poverty and killing of Hausa in the other parts of the country. Usually, they carry out selective killings, attacks and looting based on the identity of their targets. Like the OPC, *Yandaba* groups targeted non-indigenes in an effort at achieving territorial defence and creating a homogenous society. For example, during the Kano reprisal attacks of the Shagamu violence, youths gangs shouted "Yoruba must go from Kano and Obasanjo must go." Many Yoruba were intimidated and threatened by such confrontations.

A critical feature of the urban violence case studies presented in this work is that they are spilt over into centrifugal channels. Ethnic conflict in contemporary Nigeria is primarily a local phenomenon that is breaking out in many places simultaneously for similar but largely independent reasons. Ethno-religious strife is characterised by the vicious cycle of outrage and reprisal. Shagamu riots reprisal attacks and the pro-Bin-Laden riots in Kano provided examples of how conflicts spread across national and communal borders. The spill over could be better explained in terms of cultural affiliations, religion sentiments, ideology and politics. The spread of conflicts largely occur through information flows that the condition of ethnic groups in other societies is under threat and danger. Escalation is, therefore, driven by alliances between

transnational kin groups as well as by intentional or unintentional slipovers, irredentist demands and attempts to enforce homogenous tendencies. One of the most tragic aspects of ethnic conflict in Nigeria is the increasing use of extreme forms of violence.

YORUBA COMMUNITY AND URBAN VIOLENCE IN KANO

Urban violence has been a recurring phenomenon in the modern transformation of Kano metropolis. Indeed, the transition from the groundnut cash crop economy, the collapse of the manufacturing sector had created large-scale social misery and unemployment. In the ensuing crises and violence, nearly all urban-dwellers fall victims in one form or another. Even though ethno-religious violence in Kano had not been targeted against the Yoruba community until 1999, they have in earlier cases recorded casualties.

Prior to the outbreak of the 1953 Kano riot, a delegation of Igbo and Yoruba communities from Sabon-Gari gave security reports to the Senior Superintendent of Police on the alleged plan by northerners to retaliate on the lines of attack they had received after the parliamentary Budget session of April 1953 in Lagos (Report on Kano Disturbances May 1953:8). Although, the Action Group (A.G.) and the Yoruba party members organised the May 1953 government campaign that the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) and the colonial government warned against, the riot that ensued was primarily an armed confrontation between the Igbo settlers and the Hausa hosts. According to the 1953 riot victims' statistics, a total of 36 deaths were recorded; 15 Northerners and 21 Southerners (Igbo) (Report on Kano Disturbances: 21).

A total of 241 persons were wounded: 163 Northerners and 71 Southerners (Igbo). But the Yoruba community recorded 5 casualties. An indication that pre-existing social trust in the form of association and daily personal interactions between the Yoruba and the Hausa had prevented an outbreak of violence between the two groups (Olaniyi, 2001:21).

In the wake of the July 1966 coup organised by the northern Nigerian Military Officers, was the mass killing of Igbo migrants in Kano. It degenerated into the declaration of Biafra Republic and the subsequent civil war from July 1967 to January 1970. In the violence that ensued, mobs and rioters in search of Igbo ethnic groups sorted out Yoruba most of whom were identified by their dress, tribal marks and language (Horowitz, 2000:45-48). At another level, some Igbo were able to escape death or attack by taking refuge with Yoruba neighbours who dressed them as Yoruba.

The violence targeted against the Igbo in Kano affected some Yoruba families but largely created opportunities for the consolidation of their commercial base in Kano and some played the role of caretakers of Igbo abandoned properties

From the December 1980 intra-Muslim Maitatsine riots and until June 1985, the proximate causes of violence in Kano were predominantly religious in nature. The 1980 Maitatsine riot had opened up new dimension in the history of urban violence in Kano. Essentially, the Kano riot of November 1982 was a Muslim reaction to the proliferation of churches in the metropolis and the attendant provocative evangelism (Albert, 1997:305). In the violence that followed, three churches were burnt while eight others were destroyed.

This trend was reinforced by the October 1991 Reinhadt Bonnke riot. In the pandemonium

that followed the protest against the Christian crusade, several people were killed and property (Albert 1997:306).

Since the riot was considered a *Jihad*, Hausa Muslim youths invited Yoruba Muslim neighbours to heed the clarion call of eliminating the infidels. In Sabongari Kano, the entire neighbourhoods were subjugated by Christians mostly Igbo who populated the area. Every house in Sabongari was forced to bear the inscription of the Cross. These included Muslim houses while mosques were attacked and destroyed. For example, for more than a week in October 1991, the house of the prominent Yoruba Muslim cleric, Alhaji Sheikh Suleiman Bello Yarda al Warri Road, Sabongari was *protected* by removal of the Arabic signpost and shutting down of the mosque/Arabic School in the premises with the replacement of a cross hung on the building. This measure was taken after negotiations with the Christian youths popularly called "Jesus Army" who vowed to raze down houses without Cross in Sabongari. During the period, Muslims in Sabongari who were mostly Yoruba were held hostage. They could not call prayers (*Azhan*) loudly through the use of microphone. However, a rumour spread to the Kano city that the Yoruba were 'assisting' the Igbo Christians to kill Hausa Muslims resident or trading in Sabongari. In response, the Yoruba whether Muslim or Christian were attacked by the Hausa Muslims (Albert 1997:16).

Throughout mid-October 1991, shops, banks, schools, offices and markets within Kano metropolis remained closed. Many Yoruba, particularly those resident in Brigade Quarters, Corner Jabba and Tudunwada areas sought refuge at Bukavu Barracks. Some brought food items for the refugees while some sneaked out

to peaceful areas to buy food. Some evacuated their movable properties to the barracks.

Those without fares sold their properties to Hausa traders in the barracks and thus relocated directly from barracks to their hometowns. At the end of the crisis, more than 500 people were recorded dead; many shops, largely owned by southerners along Galadima Street, Court Road and Bata were destroyed; about 300 vehicles, 400 motorcycles and many bicycles were burnt at different locations in the metropolis (Albert 1997).

In December 1994, another religious violence occurred between the Christian Migrants and Hausa Muslim hosts after one Gideon Akaluka, an Igbo trader allegedly desecrated a portion of the Holy Qur'an. Though the proximate cause of the riot was religion, it degenerated into ethnic conflict targeted at Igbo traders and other ethnic minorities who were assumed to have constituted a threat to the host community (Olaniyi 2001:224) The violence dramatically changed the relations between Yoruba and Hausa, but equally laid the foundation for fresh conflicts.

The July 1999 Sagamu Reprisal Riots in Kano

By 1999, the history of urban violence in Kano took a new turn in terms of target and areas of operation 1999 was a crucial moment in the history of the Yoruba in Kano, inter-ethnic relations between the Hausa and Yoruba crossed the threshold of irreversibility. The Yoruba in Kano who lived peacefully within the neighbourhood dominated by the host community were attacked. In previous riots in Kano, such Yoruba living in the midst of the hosts often enjoyed the confidence and protection of the Hausa neighbours. This was facilitated by sense of neighbourhood, warmth

and the religion of Islam. But these unifying elements had begun to break down when new identities were formed and enforced towards the end of the 20th century.

The July 1999 anti-Yoruba riots occurred in Rijiyar Lemo, Kurna Asaba, Bachirawa, Gwammaja, Konar Bojuwa, Dawanou and other satellite towns or suburbs occupied by the Yoruba in Kano metropolis. Rijiyar Lemo, Konar Bojuwa and Bachirawa areas are parts of the modern expansion of metropolitan Kano, which has appropriated much of the surrounding villages by the end of the 1970s. These areas are completely ghettos occupied by the urban poor. Electricity was extended to these areas in 1982 during the civilian regime of Governor Abubakar Rimi. In terms of population, the Yoruba are next to the hosts and other northern Nigerians or Nigeria's Christian migrants.

Most of the Yoruba residents in these areas were low-income artisans, petty traders and budding entrepreneurs. They had relocated from Sabongari due to population pressure, high rate of crime, economic competition and high cost of living. By the middle of the 1980s, Yoruba residents in Kurna Asaba, Konar Bojuwa and Bachirawa had established ethnic associations for economic, political social and religious purposes.

It was during this period that Yoruba community, Bachirawa branch, Kano was formed. Alhaji Suleiman Akanji a transporter and estate owner in Bachirawa headed the community. It was based on these organised levels of communal identities among the Yoruba population in the area that it was popularly called *Unguar Yorubawa* (Yoruba Street). Before the riots, Yoruba-Hausa relations were cordial. They participated in each other's marriage, naming and burial ceremonies.

Though inter-marriage between Yoruba and Hausa in the area was low, children played together and household conflicts were settled amicably.

The perpetrators of the violence had strategically carried out the attacks in remote areas where security agencies were seemingly lacking and where counter-attacks could not be easily organised like Sabongan. In comparison with inadequate security outfits, these areas are strongholds of criminal gangs and organised armed youth especially the *Yandaba*. These categories of youths are ever ready combatants and benefit from extending minor crisis into violence for the purpose of looting and killing (Interview with Ibrahim Barde, Kurna Asabe 2002).

The growing poverty in these areas also constitutes threat to peaceful co-existence. Most of the residents are laid-off workers arising from industrial crisis and collapse of the factories in Kano. This group included migrants from rural areas and other part of northern Nigeria who out of sheer distrust considered migrants as usurpers, usurers, profiteers, exploiters and "pagans".

The unhealthy competition for social goods including jobs, accommodation, educational opportunities, electricity and water supply created tension in the poor neighbourhood. The violence against the Yoruba in Kano was carried out from Thursday, 22 July and 25 July 1999 by Hausa youths and social miscreants mainly the *Yandaba* and the *Yon Tauri*. The *Yandaha* and *Yan Tauri* have been associated with urban violence and terrorism in Kano metropolis. They could unleash terror on law-abiding citizens at the slightest provocation and outbreak or disturbance or disorder (Yau 2000: 161-176 and Dan Asaba 1991:85-111).

The violence was in response to the three days (July 18th -20th 1999) *Oro* mayhem in Sagamu, Ogun State which led to several deaths and the dislocation of Hausa settlers and the Yoruba hosts (Tijjani 2000 and *TELL*, August 2, 1999:24-25). The violence caused reprisals in Kano that had far greater consequences in terms of destruction of lives and properties (Olaniyi 2001:226). The Kano riot escalated due to the movement of some displaced Hausa victims from Sagamu. The displaced persons were mainly Hausa women and children.

On July 22, 1999 the Hausa youths proclaimed: "*Ina Yorubawa suke ne? Abinda akayi Ashagamu sai mun rama*" (Where are the Yoruba? We are prepared to retaliate the killing of Hausa at Sagamu). The intervention of the police minimised the first two days of violence when the victims were evacuated to safe zones including Bakavu Barracks, the NAF Base, Yoruba mosques and churches. Some kind Hausa neighbours rescued Yoruba and provided them safety in their houses. Yoruba properties were kept in the houses of Hausa neighbours against looting and burning. In several instances, Hausa neighbours provided escorts for Yoruba to the safety zones in Police and Army barracks against attacks by youth gangs. Some Yoruba who wanted to relocate to their hometowns were persuaded to remain calm and feel secured. Some streets in Kurna Asabe were protected by Hausa hosts against possible attacks. This was on one part aimed at defending the Yoruba migrants and also to protect their own households from possible casualties. Despite assurances from some Hausa hosts of security of lives and properties, some Yoruba sneaked to Sabongari, Police and Army barracks. This apprehension became more crucial in the state of insecurity

that they could be exposed to attackers and in a situation where mutual trust had broken.

The Kano State government in Radio broadcasts and visits to the Police and Army barracks appealed to the displaced Yoruba and assured them of safety when they returned to their various houses. However, the safety pronouncement was not corroborated by adequate security mechanisms. As a consequence, another wave of violence occurred on Saturday night. From Rijiyar Lemo, it spread to Kurna Asabe, Bachirawa and Tudun Bojuwa all located in Fagge, Dala and Ungogo local government area within Kano metropolis.

The Saturday night violence was instigated by the unfounded rumours circulated in the metropolis that Yoruba youths in Sabongari had mobilised themselves to retaliate the Thursday-Friday torture and attack on Yoruba. Such rumours often compounded ethnic conflicts in Kano. Therefore, Hausa youths armed themselves with traditional weapons such as clubs, swords, axes, arrows, stones, charms and cutlasses to attack Yoruba.

Over 100 people lost their lives (*TELL*, August 9, 1999, 24-25 and *Oodua News Kano* September, 1999). Many of the Yoruba victims were attacked in the process of defending their children and properties. They sustained injuries from fire, cutlass, axe and arrows. The killings and destructions were so severe that Kano State Governor Radi'u Musa Kwankwaso visited the affected areas on Sunday afternoon. It was alleged that most of the Yoruba who were attacked had had frictions or grudges against their Hausa neighbours or were targets of attacks due to economic competition. In Kurna Asabe, Yoruba could not organise for collective defence since there was no social structure that bonded them

together in the area. When the violence occurred, they became more confused and struggled to defend personal properties and families.

At *Unguwar Yorubawa* in Bachirawa quarters, the rioters found it difficult to penetrate. The Yoruba migrants who had formed communal associations before the riots dominated the area. In addition, victims of the riot in the surrounding areas took refuge at Bachirawa. They mobilised Yoruba youths on Sunday morning who launched counter-attacks. The riot was quelled by police intervention. Mobile police from the neighbouring states of Benue and Plateau were as well mobilised to provide security.

The violence produced many orphans, displaced families, refugees, widows and widowers. It contributed to the impoverishment of many households and entrepreneurs who lost capitals and wares. Many of them were forced to relocate.

The Role of Yoruba Community in Kano

Following radio broadcasts and other media reports on the outbreak of attacks on Hausa residents in Sagamu, the Yoruba community in Kano began to have security meetings with the Police, the Kano Emirate Council and the state government on the safety of the Yoruba in Kano State. But this measure could not prevent the reprisal attacks. When the violence erupted the Yoruba embarked on welfare measures and rehabilitation of the victims. On Saturday, 24 July, they visited the refugees at the barracks. Victims were swiftly taken to Yoruba-owned hospitals. Food, clothing and shelter were provided for the displaced. The Yoruba appealed to charity organisations and individuals who assisted the victims, religious organisations and individuals

donated money, food items and other materials.

Town associations in Kano such as Ede Progressive Union, Ogbomosho Parapo, Osogbo Descendants Union and some local governments in Osun State provided relief materials as well as buses for the evacuation of the victims to their hometowns. Yoruba religious associations, including mosques and churches, not only provided shelter for the victims in their premises but also gave feeding, clothing and fares to all the victims that sought refuge with their members. Notable among those religious organisations were Ansar-ud-Deen Mosque, Kano; Nur-u-Deen Mosque, Kano spent over N100,000.00; Baptist Church, Kano and the Apostolic Church all located in Sabor Gari, Kano. The Alliance for Democracy (AD) and Afenifere, a pan-Yoruba Association sent Chief Ayo Adebajo and Chief Olu Falae with the financial support of N1 million for the victims.

Although President Olusegun Obasanjo, Alhaji Ibrahim Banu and Senate delegations went to Kano, they offered no compensation or relief materials to the victims. In an effort made to resettle and compensate the victims the Yoruba community compiled the list of riot victims as well as their financial losses and submitted it to the Kano State Government.

The Yoruba community made fruitless efforts without receiving any assistance from both the federal and the Kano state governments. One year after the violence in 2000 the Yoruba Community challenged the Kano state government to publish the exact amount of assistance allegedly given to the victims of July 1999. This was in reaction to the media advertisement in some national newspapers titled "Kano State Government, 365 Days of Positive Leadership". The

newspaper advertisement disclosed, among others, the government expenses under the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development that it had given ₦44 million assistance to the victims of ethnic violence. According to the Chairperson of the Yoruba Community, Alhaji Murtala Jawando, "We are aware that ₦5,000,000.00 was donated to Shagamu victims in Ogun State through the Deputy Governor while only about ₦300,000 00 worth of the N8 million relief materials sent to Kano by the Federal Government reached the Kano victims (Kano Riots "Government Yet to Compensate Us" – Says Yoruba Victims in *Thisday*. September 6, 2000 p.6).

The displaced persons who sought refuge at the Bukavu Barracks, Kano were ejected following the expiration of one-week ultimatum given to them by the Nigerian Army. Some of them remained adamant due to psychological trauma and pains of displacement to the appeal of returning to their houses in Kano. At another level, some landlords in metropolitan Kano began to forcefully eject their Yoruba tenants for the apprehension that rioters might burn their houses (*The Guardian*, July 31, 1999, pp.16-33).

The homeless and displaced Yoruba victims went to the premises of the Oba Yoruba Kano to demand compensation and resettlement. They pleaded for transport fare to their home towns and wondered why they were neglected both by the Kano state and their home state governments. They were advised by the Yoruba community to refrain from their plan to demonstrate, but be vigilant. The victims were assured that completed census of the displaced persons in the barracks was submitted to the State Government for action. It was through the donations from individuals, philanthropists and organisations that the

Yoruba community assisted the victims to return to their hometowns and pay hospital bills.

Yoruba Rotary Club members solicited for the assistance of Rotary International which sent a medical team to Kano to perform medical surgery operations on Sunday Ogidan, a 25-year old victim of the riot whose genitals was severed during the crisis. In the aftermath of the violence, some children became orphans. For example, Yemi and Khadijat were abandoned during the July violence. Both simply identified their parents as Mama and Baba. The Yoruba community first took the displaced children to the Lost and Found Children Home at Sheka, Sabon Mandawari near Shagari Quarters in Kano. Thereafter, Alhaji Muyideen Ajani Belfo, the Chief Imam of Ansar-ud-Deen Mosque, Kano adopted the children.

Odua News, a monthly newsletter of the Yoruba community, took over the media coverage of the anti-Yoruba Kano riot when the national dailies and Kano state government-owned media put a blackout on the matter. But a government considered the *Odua News* coverage of the riot to be inciting and provocative. Therefore, the Nigerian Police arrested the editor, Prince Memaiyetan and carted away copies of the newsletter, titled 'Kano Massacre: Calamity Hit Yoruba, Many Counted Dead, ₦2000 million property ruined.' In January 2000, Yoruba community, Kano State condemned the violence masterminded by the Oduduwa Peoples' Congress (O.P.C) against the Hausa migrants in some parts of the south-western Nigeria. In the press statement signed by the community's public relations officer, Prince Ajayi Memayetan admonished (O.P.C.) to tread "softly".

Having faced vengeance in Kano after the Shagamu Hausa-Yoruba ethnic conflicts, the

community condemned the glaring injustice, unfairness and aggression in the ethnic crisis that erupted in Ajegunle, Lagos on October 10, 2000. Yoruba community held security meetings with the Emirate Council, State Security Service and the Nigerian Police in order to forestall reprisal attacks of the Lagos violence in Kano.

Yoruba community further pledged to carry out a web of activities that would assist national integration. The community implored all Yoruba in Kano to register with the organisation and maintain peaceful co-existence with other Nigerians. Towards achieving these set-goals, the community embarked on a ₦50 million Yoruba Educational and Cultural Centre through the assistance of international agencies, professional and Yoruba entrepreneurs resident in Kano.

Pro-Bin Laden Kano Riots (October 12, 2001)

The main reason for the outbreak of October 12, 2001 violence in Kano was government policy. Government policy could be explained in terms of the rights that existed between the state and federal governments over policy pronouncements and constitutional provisions. As the example of October 12, 2001 Kano riots indicates, the underlying cause was the introduction of Shariah in the state, while the proximate cause was the official pronouncement of the federal government to support the United States "War on Terrorism in Afghanistan," an Islamic State.

The Zamfara State government blazed the trail in September 1999 by expanding the penal code to include criminal matters. Shariah law was formally launched in Zamfara in January 2000. This was followed by Kano State in June. Consequently, inter-faith and ethnic relations

especially in some states of northern Nigeria changed dramatically. There was a resurgence of ethnic tension and religious violence. Following the September 2001 sectarian violence between Muslims and Christians in Jos, a total of five churches were set ablaze in Kano by Hausa youths who were allegedly on a reprisal attack on Christian. The attacks laid the foundation for the October 2001 ethno-sectarian violence.

By 10 October, 2001, speculations were rife in Kano on riots in reaction to public pronouncements by some government officials, particularly the Foreign Affairs Minister Alhaji Sule Lamido, who had on behalf of the Federal Government supported the United States' war against Afghanistan.

On Wednesday, 10 October Hausa youths, mainly *Almajiri* and *Yandaba* carried bin Laden portraits and burnt the American flag.

In various residential areas of Kano blood-letting took place. Residents of Tudun Muritala in Brigade and Ahmadjyya Line from Friday evening to Saturday morning witnessed attacks on the lives and properties of non-indigenes by Hausa youths. Houses were looted and burnt. Most of the victims took refuge in Sabongari, the police barracks in Bompai and Neman's Land, Kano. Consequently, there was dislocation of families.

In the October riots, the Yoruba in Kano witnessed attacks from two fronts: one within Sabongari area against Yoruba and their socio-economic infrastructure. For example, one Mrs Christiana Ajayi's three children were burnt in their home while she narrowly escaped by climbing the fence. In the process, she sustained several wounds and bruises. She was admitted at Lafiya Hospital, Sabongari. Private hospitals in Sabongari had an average of 10 victims

of the attack (for example, Mos-Metro, Lafiya Surgery). In Sabongari over 14 Yoruba - owned mosques were either burnt or attacked by Christian Igbo youths. Estimated damages of the Mosques in the 12 to 13 October 2001 riot was ₦12,495,241 00. (Yoruba Community, Kano, 2001).

For example, Ahmadiyya Mosque along Emir Road having Yoruba as its largest inhabitants was completely razed down after its bookshop and personal properties of resident members had been looted by Igbo youths who argued that Afghanistan an Islamic country was used as a base for Osama bin Laden to launch attacks on America.

The mosque authorities wrote letters to the government and the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) against future occurrence. While some Yoruba Muslims and Christians were attacked in the host territories some Hausa landlords ejected their Yoruba Christian tenants who thus, ran to Sabongari. About six Yoruba were killed in the riot (Interview with Dr. J. P. Aiyelangbe, President, Yoruba Community, Kano). The fundamentalist Igbo youths from Sabongari, used Christianity as a tool for asserting a homogenous community of Igbo Christians in the area. Competition for commercial space and accommodation facilities including the spread of Christianity in Sabongari made youths to attack Yoruba mosques. In order to enforce hegemony, the central symbols, socio-economic institutions of the rival ethnic group were targets of attacks. Hausa youths systematically destroyed churches while Igbo attacked mosques. The Igbo youths destroyed the mosques in Sabongari not only because the Yoruba owned them, but equally mosque constitute a central institution of the Hausa host community.

It, therefore, became a crusade that since Igbo Christians could not reach out to Hausa mosques in the city; those mosques within Sabongari should be destroyed. This was partly the aspect of identity crisis that the "new wars" exhibited in which the confrontations were not only between ethnic groups, migrants and the hosts but also intra-ethnic and migrants against migrants. The deployment of Police to quell the riots and violence aggravated tensions due to alleged partisan and selective killings, extortions and demands for bribe. Police often acted as "army of occupation" rather than pacification.

At the end of the violence, Yoruba victims submitted 41 applications for payment of damages to the Yoruba community; 33 affidavits for loss/loot/burnt properties of Yoruba individuals and organisations were made at the High Court of Justice Kano State; two applications were submitted to the Nassarawa Local Government Council Secretariat. These claims indicated that some Yoruba in various parts of Kano metropolis irrespective of religion were affected. In all, Yoruba victims submitted applications of damages worth over N500 million that was double of the estimated damages of the 1999, which was ₦200 million.

Like the 1999 riot most of the victims were treated in Yoruba-owned hospitals. Yoruba associations and religious organisations also shouldered the responsibilities of caring for their members. Police official statistics confirmed 32 persons dead with 52 injured; 57 houses and 32 shops; 15 vehicles were destroyed. Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) claimed 350 of its members were killed and 600 were missing. The police confirmed that 243 persons were arrested with 222 charged to court on various counts. The Chief Magistrate Court

granted 212 persons bail (*Human Rights Situations Report*, June-December, 2001 p.12).

Almost all Yoruba-owned houses in the remote/interior areas of Brigade quarters, Konar Hudu and PRP/Ahmadiyya were sold at give-away prices.

Most of the Yoruba landlords in the remote areas/conflict zones sold their houses and relocated either to their hometowns or more remote areas within Kano metropolis. In the 2001 violence, some kind, Hausa neighbours protected Yoruba against attacks. At Yankura line in Brigade quarters, most of the Yoruba residents were protected due to the influence of Hajiya Rabi Motor a woman-politician who often contacts security agents against in the event of any crises.

The State government imposed curfew to control the violence. There were also plans to set up peace committees in each of the wards in the metropolis to assist in the maintenance of peace and protection of lives and properties. The Government promised to support the victims. President Olusegun Obasanjo visited the victims at 'refugee camps' and also the affected areas. Government representatives and elected members of House of Representatives visited Sabongari and sympathised with the victims. The State Government ordered arrests of some *Yandaba* and other gangs and charged them to court.

The Role of Yoruba Community Kano in Managing Urban Violence

As a community in Kano, the Yoruba has explored a multi-faceted approach to the management of persistent urban violence. Diverse measures have been embarked upon to accomplish this goal. These include the formation of community-based multi-ethnic

security networks, police community relations, formation of National Integration Forum, Yoruba Community Council Northern States, establishment of Vigilanté groups, advocacy programmes, dialogue and courtesy visits with the host community leaders, inter-faith joint prayers and welfare programmes.

Conclusion

In all, the violent riots led to the relocation of many Yoruba families away from Kano. Individuals and households were dislocated; many children were orphaned and many women were widowed. The riots brought about a drastic decline in Yoruba commercial activities in Kano Between 1999 and 2001. Most parts of Kano became unsafe for the Yoruba as they suffered violence from fellow Igbo migrants and Hausa host community. The severity of ethnic conflict is also illustrated in the statistics on refugees and displaced persons. In 2000, 500,000 Nigerians were displaced due to ethnic/communal clashes and 270,000 others are now refugees in neighbouring Cameroon on account of internal conflicts. These refugees are mainly those who led from Kano and Taraba states owing to ethnic conflicts. Most Yoruba sold off/auctioned their properties and relocated from Kano. Beyond the contentious ethnic relations that such urban violence generates, it equally militates against the firm consolidation of democratic governance. It has been established that the Yoruba community in Kano adopted dialogue and peacebuilding approaches in dealing with urban violence.

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