

Nigerians flee town after violence, government warns rioters will be shot

LAGOS, Nigeria (AP) — The regional governor warned rioters would be shot on Sunday as hundreds of people fled the northern Nigerian city of Kaduna after four days of religious violence over the Miss World pageant killed 200 people.

The violence among Muslims and Christians began after a newspaper article last week said Islam's founding prophet would have chosen a Miss World contestant for a wife. The pageant was then moved to London and the contestants packed their gear and fled to the British capital.

By late Saturday, the Nigerian Red Cross counted 215 bodies on the streets and in mortuaries throughout Kaduna, 100 miles north of the capital Abuja, said Emmanuel Ijewere, president of the organization. Previous estimates said 100 people were killed.

An unknown number of others killed in the riots were believed to have been buried by family members uncounted, Ijewere told The Associated Press.

No new violence was reported Sunday in Kaduna, a Muslim-dominated city with a

large Christian minority. Still, hundreds of people recovered what valuables they could from their destroyed homes and fled in cars, buses and on foot.

Those who stayed attended church services and replenished food stocks at markets, where a few meat and vegetable stalls reopened.

The Kaduna governor, Ahmed Makarfi, told state radio that security forces would "shoot on sight" anyone inciting new violence.

Yakubu Ibrahim, 27, returned to find his home in ruins Sunday after taking refuge at a local army barracks for three days.

"I lost everything except my shirt and my pants. I don't even have shoes," said Ibrahim, whose parents and four siblings were missing after the riots.

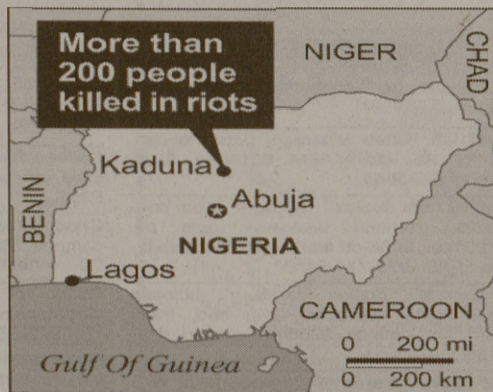
The fighting began after the Lagos-based ThisDay newspaper published an article on Nov. 16 saying Islam's founding prophet would have approved of the pageant.

"What would Muhammad think? In all honesty, he would probably have chosen a wife from among them," Isioma Daniel

wrote.

Muslim protesters burned down the paper's office in Kaduna on Wednesday and rioting briefly spread to the capital, Abuja, on Friday before ending a day later.

More than 500 people were injured and 4,500 left homeless in Kaduna, Ijewere said. Casualty figures were not immediately available for Abuja.



SOURCES: Associated Press; ESRI AP

NEWS IN BRIEF

Endeavour chases after space station

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — Space shuttle Endeavour chased after the international space station Sunday, bringing a relief crew for its three longtime inhabitants.

"We're on our way," said the shuttle's skipper, James Wetherbee.

The 250-mile-high linkup will occur Monday afternoon.

American astronaut Peggy Whitson and Russian cosmonauts Valery Korzun and Sergei Treschev have been aboard the space station for almost six months. Their mission was supposed to last 4 1/2 months, but all of the space shuttles were grounded after they moved in because of cracked plumbing. Then, Endeavour ran into other trouble that further delayed liftoff.

The long wait ended Saturday night with an ear-splitting

launch.

Wetherbee said Sunday that moments after liftoff, the shuttle was pointed toward a nearly full moon and he could see it through the front window of the cockpit.

Wetherbee and his crew gave Endeavour's robot arm a workout as the shuttle drew closer to the station. The job took on added significance because of the damage that workers inflicted two weeks ago during oxygen-leak repairs; they accidentally hit the arm with scaffolding.

Despite the 2-inch bruise near the shoulder of the 50-foot crane, it operated fine in orbit, although a wrist joint was sluggish.

The arm will be used Tuesday to lift a giant girder from the shuttle payload bay for installation on the space station.

Endeavour will spend a full week at the space station and return to Earth, with Whitson and her two station crewmates, on Dec. 4.

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