

Written by freezak

Saturday, 30 September 2017 17:37 - Last Updated Friday, 22 December 2017 08:55

---

For the last nine days since the start of this year's mourning sessions across the globe, there are indications that the Nigerian government is poised to repeat the brutal assault it carried out last year against mourners.

The Kaduna state government has kick-started the unjustified trampling on the rights of people who are taking part in their religious duty in Kaduna and Zaria, in scandalous violation of all known sane laws. Similarly in the last few days, Sokoto state has followed suit in the brutality and went further to announce an illegal ban on our religious practices during this period in time. This is in contradiction to the sections of the Nigerian Constitution that guarantees freedom of thought, conscience and religion, including freedom to change one's religion or belief, and freedom (either alone or in community with others, and in public or in private) to manifest and propagate one's religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance.

In Sokoto, unwarranted arrests by policemen were done having gleefully wielded their arms all over in nooks and crannies of the town, including at the private residence of Sheikh Qaseem Umar and the venue of the Ashura mourning congregation. In Kaduna and Zaria, crude clubs and sticks as well as tear gas have been deployed against peaceful mourners observing their religious obligations. As Ashura procession is set to be marked worldwide tomorrow, a significant threat to the lives and properties of our brothers and sisters exists here in Nigeria seeing the antecedents.

Last year we saw how the government contracted some hoodlums and ferried them in Police vehicles to attack our activities, persons and properties by confronting processions, burning homes and business premises, as well as assaulting mourners as they make their way to or from the gatherings. The impunity, misuse of office and disregard to our constitutionally guaranteed rights using state-sponsored terror tactics by government and security agents tramples on our rights to worship, associate and propagate our beliefs freely. We will like to make it clear, for the avoidance of doubts, that Ashura mourning events and processions are our religious duties and obligations as can be seen to be similarly observed worldwide. We will continue to lawfully and peacefully challenge these forms of extreme hate and seek redress in the most appropriate ways in the face of all the provocations.

It is worth remembering that in all the years since the Ashura procession started in Nigeria, participants have never once resorted to violence even in the face of a bloody history of attacks against them by the brutal might of the state. We therefore call on people of conscience, spirited persons and groups as well as the International community to do their utmost to rein in the government and anyone else involved in these nefarious plans, to uphold the rights of the participants and ensure their total protection everywhere. We will hold the government particularly responsible for any harm that may be inflicted on the persons and properties of Ashura mourners.

Finally, we call for the immediate and unconditional release of our leader, Sheikh Ibraheem

**PRESS STATEMENT: Government must protect Ashura Religious activities and will be held responsible for**

Written by freezak

Saturday, 30 September 2017 17:37 - Last Updated Friday, 22 December 2017 08:55

---

Zakzaky and all others still being detained.

SIGNED BY

IBRAHIM MUSA

PRESIDENT MEDIA FORUM

Skype: ibrahim.musa42

30/09/17