

Let us strengthen the Coalition for Peace

Address by Malam Nasir El-Rufai, Governor of Kaduna State, at the Emergency Meeting of the Kaduna State Council of Chiefs held at the Council Chambers of Sir Kashim Ibrahim House on Tuesday, 23rd October 2018

PROTOCOLS

Let me begin by commiserating with you all on the sad abduction of Agom of Kachia. This is the second time a royal father is being so treated. We are outraged by this disrespect for tradition. May the souls of his three deceased aides rest in peace. Amen.

1. On behalf of the Kaduna State Government, I wish to acknowledge the efforts of your Royal Highnesses in the cause of peace in our state. In particular, we are grateful to their Royal Highnesses, the Emir of Zazzau for his sterling leadership and counsel, recommending that we invite you here today. We are grateful that you are able to come even at short notice, and even after rescheduling it from the previous date of Friday.
2. As you are aware, there have been breaches of the peace since Thursday, 18th October 2018, when unrest broke out in Kasuwan Magani. The state government promptly

imposed a curfew in the area. The loss of lives was staggering- at least 55 corpses were recovered, and the damage to lives and livelihoods considerable. A brazen crime was committed. We owe the victims justice, and our state respite from the impunity of those who have arrogated to themselves the authority to wantonly violate lives, livelihoods and the rights of others.

3. The necessity to apply the law vigorously is illustrated by the panic and anxiety that spread into our capital city and environs as people spread vile rumours on Sunday, 21st October 2018. Hoodlums exploited the situation to engage in further criminal activity and to violate the rights of other citizens. The aftermath of the disinformation and resulting panic led to the death of another 22 citizens, injuries to 44 persons and destruction of property within Kaduna metropolis. Some of the injured have been discharged, but 34 others are still receiving medical attention.
4. The Kaduna State Government was therefore compelled to declare a 24-hour curfew in the metropolis to stem the proliferation of false rumours, prevent the spread of chaos and to enable the security agencies to restore calm. We have gone round affected areas, visited hospitals,

interacted with communities and counseled against reliance on unsubstantiated information.

5. I wish to inform your Royal Highnesses that the government is constantly reviewing the situation with the leaders of the security agencies. Yesterday, senior government and security officials went around Kaduna metropolis, Kujama and Kasuwan Magani to further reassure and calm our people. We also visited Kachia, where we met and commiserated with the family of HRH Agom Kachia whose release from abduction we are all working and praying for.

6. Your Royal Highnesses, we all have a supreme obligation to overcome the legacy of strife in Kaduna State. We are not the only diverse place on this planet. And we must not hold on to a legacy of hate and division. The first ethno-religious clash in the state which happened in Kasuwan Magani in 1980, led to the loss of our innocence. Since then, it appears that a constituency has developed which believes that violence pays, and is convinced that violence has no consequence for the perpetrators.

7. It is time to firmly persuade them otherwise. It is time for a powerful coalition for peace to speak frankly and support firm actions against those who menace the right of our

citizens to live in peace wherever they choose, to freely practice their faith anywhere and to pursue legitimate livelihoods without let or hindrance. No group or individual will be allowed to veto or constrain the rights that the Constitution has guaranteed.

8. The pace of prosecution in our courts is hampered by the heavy case loads of our judges. We are working to secure the approval of the National Judicial Council to expand the bench in Kaduna State with 20 additional high court judges. We also clearly need to have more police and other law enforcement officers on the ground to provide assurance to the law abiding, and to deter criminals.
9. In this wise, the Kaduna State Government is working with the Kaduna State Police Command to establish new divisions in Narayi and Sabon Tasha. We are grateful to the police authorities for also agreeing to establish a police division in Kasuwan Magani. The state government and the relevant local government councils will provide the buildings to house these new police formations. More military Strike Force bases will also be established.
10. We can all agree on the need for more security assets and faster dispensation of justice in our state. But our

communities have to enlist in the coalition for peace. Beyond boots on the ground, and a phalanx of security agents, the ultimate guarantee of peaceful coexistence is the willingness of individuals and our communities to live in peace. As said in the state broadcast last night, harmony in our land requires a commitment to obey the law, and to use only peaceful and lawful means to resolve differences.

11. Your Royal Highnesses, our communities have an obligation to keep the peace and to report and expose criminal elements. The Kaduna State Government intends to encourage this by vigorously enforcing the various provisions of the Riots Damage Law of 1958, the Collective Punishment Law of 1915 and the Peace Preservation Law of 1917. These laws impose costs on communities that permit violence in their midst, obliging community members to be charged and levied monies for the cost of repairing damage done during episodes of violence.

12. Everyone, particularly our royal fathers, needs to be aware of their stake in preventing disorder and upholding peace. The government will shortly be providing details of the enforcement process of these extant laws. We cannot

compromise on the imperative of securing our communities from criminals and rascals. Enough is enough!

13. In situations of unrest, it is common for traditional leaders to disclaim any control over unruly youth. It is an excuse we can no longer accept. Where significant sections of a community disdain the counsel or authority of their traditional ruler, it imperils the rationale for keeping the traditional institution, and the occupant of the office.

14. The Kaduna State Government will continue to advance the cause of peace on many fronts. As a government committed to promoting equality of opportunity, we intend to help promote prosperity by rebuilding and modernising markets in places impacted by conflict. The market in Kafanchan is already being rebuilt. We shall be extending this to the overstretched or destroyed markets in places such as Zonkwa, Zangon-Kataf, Kasuwan Magani and Kujama. The goal is to ensure that the new markets will accommodate not only the existing and previous shop owners, but also others who aspire to and are able to own shops. Perceptions that there are insurmountable barriers to securing trading places in markets will be erased in the new, expanded and

modernised markets. The designs for these markets will include space to host police formations.

15. It is sad that many of the places of worship that were destroyed in crises since 2011 are yet to be reconstructed. We need to achieve closure on resettlement of displaced persons, payment of compensation to 2011 victims and the reconstruction of destroyed properties. We have therefore approached the Federal Government to provide the balance of 53% of assessed compensation to enable victims to rebuild their lives, and for all places of worship to be restored.

16. Your Royal Highnesses, you all have a fundamental role to play as pillars of peace and lawful conduct. The Kaduna State Government appreciates your significant contributions and wishes you all success in serving and leading our people. We look forward to hosting these meetings every quarter to sustain our efforts to promote unity, peaceful coexistence and progress in our state.

17. In conclusion, I wish to update you on the resolutions of the Security Council meeting that was held earlier today:

- a. Selective variation of the curfew as appropriate in certain parts of Kaduna metropolis, and relaxation in Kasuwan Magani and Kujama.
- b. KSTA vehicles with Police/NSCDC to escort outside travellers passing through Kaduna, and from train stations, airports, motor parks and entrances into our city.
- c. Police to work with other relevant agencies to revive the Task Force to enforce the proscription of operations of commercial motorcyclists.
- d. Re-establishment of checkpoints and military patrols along Kachia Road to enhance the security of that axis.
- e. Review of the activities of youth groups and community development associations to ensure that they are conducive to the promotion of peace and harmony.

Thank you for honouring us with your royal presence.
Thank you for listening.

God bless Kaduna State!

God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria!!