

Nigeria: Muslim group storms Osun priestess' house: if you love yourself don't hold isese festival in Ilorin

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A Muslim group, Majlisu Shabab li Ulamahu Society, in Ilorin, Kwara State has stormed the residence of a traditional religion priestess to impose a ban on any form of isese festival in five local governments in the state.

Ise, the Yoruba word for tradition, is used to denote different kinds of festivals held by adherents of the Yoruba traditional religion in Nigeria and Cuba, Brazil, the United States, Benin, and other countries.

The group listed four local governments in the state where any form of traditional religion is prohibited. The local governments are Ilorin West, Ilorin East, Ilorin South, and Asa.



The group warned a young woman who attended to them at the priestess' residence that the Emir of Ilorin, Dr. Ibrahim Sulu-Gambari, sent them to convey the warning.

The priestess, who is an Osun devotee, Yeye Adesikemi Olokun Omolara Olatunji, had reportedly released fliers announcing a three-day traditional event aimed at celebrating certain Yoruba deities.

Reacting to the social media post, members of the Muslim group stormed the home of Yeye Adesikemi where her sister simply identified as Alaba, whom many of the Imams present, took turns to either address or confront with statements and questions, to warn against the actualisation of said event.

Although the group stressed that the visit and their intentions were peaceful, the Imams, while making subtle threats, warned Alaba of the potentially dire consequences of holding the festival, while stressing that the state only supports Islamic activities.

Speaking in Yoruba, a member of the group, who described himself as an Imam, said, "Ilorin does not permit idol worshipping, we are ardent Muslims in the land of the emirate."

Another Imam further reiterated the group's stance adding that they were sent by the "Emir of Ilorin, to warn against this I sese festival." He continued saying traditional religious worshippers could celebrate in private but never publicly in the 'emirate'

In a short video published after the visit, Yeye Omolara bemoaned the development. Speaking in Yoruba she said, "I have been living in Ilorin for many years and have experienced nothing but peace until recently. I have always been fair and kind to my neighbours and this has been reciprocated over the years. One of my people shared the invite online which caught the attention of the Imams. In a matter of hours, I was tagged on numerous posts and also began to receive death threats..."