

Biography of Sheikh Zakzaky

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Biography of Sheikh Ibraheem Zakzaky, Leader of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria.

Was born on 5th of May 1953 (15th Sha'ban 1372 AH). His early education was at the traditional Quranic and Islamic Schools from tender age to the age of sixteen in the historic city and traditional center of learning. He did not attend formal primary school. His first contact with formal education was in 1969 at the Provincial Arabic School, Zaria-a school where the then Zaria NA was locallu training Arabic teachers for its primary schools.

From 1971 - 1975 he attended the famous School for Arabic Studies (SAS), Kano. Founded in 1934 as Northern Nigeria Law School it has been described as "the mother of Bayero University". Almost one hundred per cent of Northern Grand Khadis are products of the school. Being interested in some subjects not taught at the school, El Zakzaky combined his Grade II Teachers Certificate course with private GCE studies in subjects like Government and Economics. In 1975 after finishing school exams he sat for Advanced Level GCE in Government, Economics, Hausa and Islamic Studies. Successful results in these exams qualified him for a direct entry into the Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria for a B. Sc. (Economics) degree course from 1976 to 1979. He was active member of the Muslim Student Society (MSS) at both campus and national levels. In 1978, then Secretary - General of the MSS (ABU), was believed to be the main brain behind the nation-wide demonstrations in support of the inclusion of Shari'ah in the Nigerian constitution. He was elected Vice-President (International Affairs) of the MSS (National Body) in 1979.

Interestingly, he continued to learn from deferent ulama in the traditional system of learning in both Kano and Zaria. His teachers include Malam Sani Abdulkadir, Malam Isa of Madaka, Malam Sani Na'ibi and Malam Ibrahim of Kakaki all in Zaria. In Kano he learnt from Shawish Abdallah of Sagaji and Malam Nuhu the Imam of Yola. His main occupation from student days to date is an Islamic scholar and activist - engaged mainly in learning, research and teaching Islamic studies. His speeches have been written into many booklets mainly in Hausa Language. In the words of Dr Iqbal Siddiqui he is "the de facto leader of the Islamic movement in Nigeria". The goal of the Islamic movement is to enlighten the Muslims as to their duties as individuals and as a community. The movement owns more than three hundred primary/secondary schools located in different places mainly in the northern part of the country. They are known by the name of Fudiyah Schools. This is in addition to many Islamic centers and other institutions. The movement also owns the Nigeria's most widely circulated newspaper, Al Mizan, in the

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Hausa language.

The Sheikh was jailed several times for his ideas by all the successive Nigerian regimes from Obasanjo in khaki to the last Abacha/Abubakar regime. Charges against him were always sedition or inciting disaffection to Government. In Abacha time it was for declaring, "there is no government except that of Islam". His total prison experience is nine years in nine different prisons across the country - the most famous being Enugu (1981-1984), the notorious Interrogation Center of NSO, Lagos (1984-1985), Kiri-Kiri Maximum Security (1985), Port Harcourt (1987-1989 and 1996-1997) and Kaduna (1987 and 1997-1998).

He traveled widely across the world. Countries visited include UK, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Lebanon, Sudan, South Africa, US and Russia. All the travels have been for Islamic reasons - mostly attending conferences and seminars. He is married to one wife with nine children.