

UN urges action against Jos crisis masterminds

TUESDAY, 28 DECEMBER 2010 00:00 FROM LAOLU AKANDE (NEW YORK), AZIMAZI MOMOH JIMOH (ABUJA), ISA ABDUSALAMI (JOS), ALEX OLISE, ISAAC TAIWO (LAGOS), CHRIS IREKAMBA (WARRI)

Kumuyi, others condemn violence

From within and outside the country have come more condemnation of the resumed bloodshed in Jos, the Plateau State capital.

The United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon who expressed concern over the violence described it as “deplorable acts of violence, especially at a time when millions of Nigerians are celebrating religious holidays.” He said the Nigerian government must “bring those responsible to justice.”

Others who condemned the Jos violence include the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), General Superintendent of Deeper Christian Life Ministry, Pastor William Folorunsho Kumuyi and the presidential candidate of the Fresh Democratic Party (FRESH) Rev. Chris Okotie.

Their reactions came as Plateau State Governor Jonah David Jang called on the Federal Government to possibly amend the Nigerian constitution to give more powers to state governors to call out the police in their states to quench any uprising without having to obtain permission from the headquarters in Abuja before doing so.

And following the violence in Jos, the National Assembly has been called upon to, as a matter of urgency, pass the counter-terrorism bill that has been pending before it for months.

The United Nations scribe, Ban, said he was appalled by the violence that caused the loss of many innocent lives in the Plateau and Borno states a few days ago, warning that ethnic hatred must not be allowed to foment in Nigeria.

A statement from the UN headquarters in New York condemned the violence, calling them deplorable acts of violence, and calling on the Federal Government to ensure that the perpetrators do not go scot free. According to the statement, the Secretary-General conveys his sincere condolences to the families of the victims and to the government and people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The CAN also urged the government to go after the masterminds of the violence whom it described as unfortunate and no longer acceptable.

CAN president, Pastor Ayo Oritsejafor who spoke at a forum on Poverty Alleviation Scheme of the Word of Life Bible Church, Warri, Delta State yesterday said “ first of all, at least 30 people

were killed in Jos; in Maiduguri at least, six people, including a pastor were killed. We condemned it totally. It is unacceptable for a nation like Nigeria. We are aware of what certain people want to do. They want Nigeria ungovernable. They want to make it impossible for the president to run the country. What they want is a situation where Christians would start retaliating. But I have appealed to them not to retaliate.”

He appealed to the Federal Government to seriously overhaul the security agencies to ensure that their intelligence units are improved to nip crisis in the bud.

Commenting on the mayhem, Pastor Kumuyi lamented the loss of innocent lives, saying the situation which lies between religious and political undertone should be properly handled by the government with a view to not only apprehending the perpetrators, but promptly visit them with the full weight of the law.

Addressing the media yesterday during the on-going Deeper Life December Retreat with the theme: “Power for the present hour” at Deeper Life Conference Centre, Lagos- Ibadan Express way, the cleric said a situation in which intra-sect feuds easily lead to the burning of churches and the needless killings of church ministers and innocent citizens is an abhorrent trend which must not be allowed to continue.

According to him, the government should also look into the activities of security agents who should prevent such unfortunate incidents, and if found unfit, should be changed. Kumuyi seized the occasion to appeal to political actors at all levels to employ a more elegant and elevated language of discourse during political campaigns towards 2011 election as what the nation does not need for now is an over-heated climate that could further compromise an already tenuous fabric.

Kumuyi added that if the striving for leadership position was all about service to God and to humanity, then the acrimony and sometimes intemperate language being used by political actors must be substantially toned down.

In his reaction, Okotie said: “We condemn the senseless destruction of lives and property in Jos, regardless of the motives of the perpetrators. This is what we least expect in this Christmas season when we are celebrating Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace.”

In a statement issued from his party’s secretariat in Lagos, Okotie said Jos deserves some respite from sporadic sectarian conflict which had been plaguing the city of late. “Jos used to be a quiet, calm city, noted for its friendly people, until fanatics invaded the populace. I strongly urge President Goodluck Jonathan to rise to the occasion this time and find a lasting solution to this perennial unrest, especially as we approach election year,” he said.

Governor Jang who sought more power to control the police, also wanted to know whether there is no where in the world where it is stated that the police should be federally controlled, especially in a democracy that Nigeria is currently practicing. He also wanted answers to the policy of changing the commissioners of police in states especially those of Plateau where, as a

commissioner is getting used to mastering the environment, he is suddenly changed and replaced.

“They continue changing the commissioners of police even without letting the governors know, who are said to be the chief security officers of their states. This is not the best. When a new commissioner is deployed to a state, he will start all over to get used to the environment and as he is getting used to it, he is changed again,” Jang said.

He also wanted to know whether the Special Task Force (STF) Commander takes orders from: The commander of the 3rd Armoured Division in Jos? Jang spoke yesterday when the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), Air Marshall Oluseyi Petunrin, paid him a visit to commiserate with him over the bomb blasts that occurred on the Christmas Eve.

To answer the question posed by the governor on whether the task force takes orders from the GOC, the CDS had to ask all the journalists inside the governor’s residence to leave because of its sensitive nature.

The GOC is a Maj. Gen. while the STF commander is a Brigadier General. But the commander of the STF which was jointly manned by the immediate past GOC, Major-General Saleh Maina, had now been separated so that the STF is autonomous of the GOC.

On the real problems of the Plateau, Jang said enemies of the state are aware that Plateau is a mini-Nigeria, noting that there is no tribe in Nigeria that cannot be found in the state. His words: “When you touch Plateau State, you get reactions from all over the nation. “Plateau State is marketing itself into an international dimension. This is why the Federal Government and Plateau State government should make sure that we get to the root of this crisis.

“My greatest worry is that when people are arrested, the investigation is not done here. When they are taken away, you don’t even hear about them again. It could be recalled that the crisis started taking this dimension in 1994. It got worse in 2001 and now it is something that is happening on a very regular basis. If we don’t nip it in the bud now, we don’t know how far it can go.

“People give it all kinds of insinuations. Some say it is religious, some say it is political. I don’t know what actually is the correct one because when I went round the scene the next morning that this thing happened, all the affected victims lying down, you cannot actually say all these people lying down are from a particular tribe or a particular religion because when you throw up that thing (bomb), there is no name written on the bullet. So, when this thing scatters, it doesn’t go to any particular tribe. At the end of the day, it affects all the people who are living there.”

The anti-terrorism Bill is aimed, among others, at establishing a legal framework for dealing with terrorism-related cases in the country.

An Abuja-based scholar in terrorism issues, Dr. Sunny Moneke who made the call yesterday,

said the government would not be able to effectively tackle the situation unless it has in place a counter-terrorism law that would establish the necessary agency to deal with the menace.

Citing the various instances to show that terrorism is real in Nigeria, Moneke said “it is only cynics or unpatriotic Nigerians that would still say this is not terrorism. It has happened in Abuja on Independence Day when the whole world joined us to celebrate our golden jubilee, Boko Haram has been killing at will, so what are we talking about?

“Countless number of innocent people have been murdered in the most brutal manner in Jos since 2001 and we still say this is not terrorism? What happened on Christmas Day in Jos is a classical case of terrorism. But like I have always advocated, the answer is for the National Assembly to act fast and pass the counter-terrorism bill into law,” he stated.

http://www.nguardiannews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=33721:un-urges-action-against-jos-crisis-masterminds&catid=1:national&Itemid=559

Jos: Soldiers foil fresh explosions

Headlines Dec 28, 2010

By Taye Obateru

JOS—A FRESH attempt to bomb some parts of Jos was foiled, yesterday, after the Special Task Force which is maintaining security in Jos intercepted a group of people who were trying to plant an explosive in Nasarawa Gwom area even as the death toll in the Christmas Eve multiple bomb explosions has risen to 80

The National Emergency Management Agency, NEMA, said yesterday that the death toll and the ensuing violence in the Plateau State capital has risen to 80. NEMA's Deputy Director (Communications) Daniel Gambo who confirmed the figures on Monday said 180 people are currently hospitalized in various health institutions while 70 have been treated and discharged.

Spokesman of the Special Task Force, Capt. Charles Ekeocha, who displayed substances which included a mixture of fertilizer, broken bottles and other unknown substances, said a group of people were seen putting the items together in the area.

Ekeocha said that on sighting the soldiers, the people left the items and fled following which the soldiers recovered them.



EXPLOSIVES: Some items for bomb making recovered from suspects in Jos, Plateau State, yesterday.

He urged residents to exercise restraint and not do anything that could aggravate the situation on ground.

Meanwhile, the Chief of Defence Staff, CDS, Air Chief Marshall Oluseyi Petirin, has vowed that the perpetrators of the Christmas Eve bombings in the Plateau State capital must be unmasked and brought to book.

The vow came as the Special Task Force, STF, paraded three suspects, two of them for attempting to torch a church at Dogon Karfe area and the third, a Nigerian for being in possession of dangerous weapons.

CDS appeals to Jos residents

Addressing a crowd at Gada Biyu in Kabon area after visiting the site of the blast there, the CDS said the crisis in Jos could no longer be taken for granted adding that a situation where people perpetrated evil and continue to walk the street free must no longer be condoned.

He described the situation as overwhelming but appealed to the people to be calm and not to take the laws into their hands, assuring that everything would be done to get the culprits.

The CDS also visited some of the victims at the Bingham Teaching Hospital where he went from bed to bed offering apologies to nearly 40 people who suffered injuries in Friday's blasts.

One casualty, John James, said he heard the explosions and rushed to help the wounded, when the army arrived and fired shots.

He said: "I was trying to drag out victims from the bombs, when I was shot by a soldier."

The CDS also visited Governor Jonah Jang and the Gbong Gwom Jos to sympathize over the incident.

Parading the three suspects, spokesman of the STF, Capt. Charles Ekeocha said two of them were arrested on Sunday while trying to torch a building with dynamite and were found with seven unexpended cartridges and two wraps of hemp.

He said the third suspect who is a citizen of Niger Republic was caught with a sickle knife and a dagger in the same area.

Meanwhile, a Jos based cleric, Prophet Isah El Buba has alleged that the bombings were directed at destabilizing the governments of President Goodluck Jonathan and Governor Jang.

He told journalists on Monday that the action was deliberately planned for Jos, the hotbed of the Middle Belt so that the crisis would spread to other parts of the country.

El-Buba who is General Overseer of Evangelical Bible Outreach international said: "What is going on is a direct attack on the government of President Jonathan and Governor Jang of Plateau State and the Federal Government must wake up to defend the Nigerian nation from the hands of few religious zealots who are out to carry out a secret agenda against the majority interest of Nigeria."

The Plateau State Council of the Nigeria Union of Journalists, NUJ, which lost a member in the blast has also called on government to take decisive action to prevent its recurrence and other forms of violence in the country.

A statement signed by the Chairman, Mr. Katdapba Gobum and Secretary, Mr. Isaac Shobayo said the slain journalist, Mr. Augustine Sindi who was a photo journalist with state owned The Standard newspaper was at scene of the multiple bomb blast at Kabong and was among the first casualties that died instantly before getting to the hospital.

UN Scribe flays violence

United Nations Secretary General, Ban Ki moon, also condemned the violence that broke out in Jos. A UN statement said Ban expressed his support on efforts by the Nigerian authorities to bring those responsible to justice.

The UN chief conveyed his condolences to the families of the victims and to the government and people of Nigeria.

Okotie condemns bombings

The presidential candidate of the Fresh Democratic Party, FRESH, Rev. Chris Okotie, condemned the bombings in Jos that left deaths and destruction in its trail.

He said in a statement: "We condemn the senseless destruction of lives and property in Jos, regardless of the motives of the perpetrators. This is what we least expect in this Christmas season when we are celebrating Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace."

Okotie expressed concern that Jos, the Plateau State capital deserves some respite from sporadic sectarian conflict which had been plaguing the city of late, adding: "I strongly urge President Goodluck Jonathan to rise to the occasion this time and find a lasting solution to this perennial unrest, especially as we approach election year."

<http://www.vanguardngr.com/2010/12/jos-soldiers-foil-fresh-explosions/>

Armed Christians and Muslims clash after Nigeria killings

Pastor and five others shot in raids on churches while explosions 300 miles away claim 32 victims

- Sunday 26 December 2010 18.45 GMT



People walk past the wreckage of a truck destroyed in an explosion in the city of Jos. Photograph: Afolabi Sotunde/Reuters

Clashes broke out between armed Christian and Muslim groups near the central Nigerian city of Jos yesterday after Christmas Eve bombings in the region killed more than 30 people.

Witnesses said buildings were set ablaze and people forced to run for cover as the police and military struggled to disperse crowds.

"Houses are on fire all over the place and I can see injured people covered in blood being dragged by friends and family towards the hospital," a witness said.

The unrest was triggered by explosions on Friday in villages near Jos, capital of Plateau state, that killed at least 32 people and left 74 critically injured.

The tensions are rooted in decades of resentment between indigenous groups, mostly Christian or animist, who are vying for control of fertile farmlands and for economic and political power with mostly Muslim migrants and settlers from the north.

In the north of the country, dozens of armed men attacked a church on Christmas Eve, dragging the pastor out of his home and shooting him dead along with two young choristers rehearsing for a late-night carol service.

The group of about 30 attackers armed with guns and knives also killed two people who were passing by the Victory Baptist church in Maiduguri. The assailants left after torching the church and pastor's house.

At the other end of the city, Reverend Haskanda Jessu of the Church of Christ in [Nigeria](#) said three men attacked his church, killing a 60-year-old security guard.

Nigeria's president, Goodluck Jonathan, expressed sympathy with the victims and said the government would bring the perpetrators to justice. "I assure Nigerians that the government will go to the root of this. We must unearth what caused it and those behind it must be brought to book."

The explosions were the first major attack in Jos since the state government lifted a curfew in May.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/dec/26/nigeria-terror-attacks-kill-40?INTCMP=SRCH>

Riot police out on streets in Nigerian city

Riot police were patrolling the streets of Jos in central Nigeria on Monday after clashes between rival ethnic groups over a series of bombings on Christmas Eve left as many as 14 dead.



The aftermath of an explosion in Jos Photo: REUTERS

By Aislinn Laing 27 Dec 2010

Four explosions went off on Friday as people went about their last-minute Christmas shopping, killing at least 32 and wounding more than 100. Another six people were killed in the north of the country after heavily-armed gangs attacked two churches.

Early on Sunday morning, Muslim and Christian youths took to the streets and the clashes that followed saw houses set alight and shots fired.

Mohammed Shittu, a leader of the Hausa Muslim community in Jos who headed a search and rescue team, said 14 bodies were recovered and 23 houses were burned down following Sunday's riots. He said another 33 people were wounded.

The violence saw Namadi Sambo, Nigeria's vice president, cancel a visit to inspect the Christmas Eve bomb damage. But Abdulrahman Akano, the state police commissioner, played down the severity of the unrest and said he had mobilised riot police to restore calm.

"There were some skirmishes between the two groups and it's under control now," he said. "My records show three killed. One or two houses were burned."

The latest incidents follow a period of relative calm after the death of hundreds of people in religious and ethnic clashes in the region at the start of the year.

Jos is the capital of [Nigeria](#)'s central belt, where the Muslim north meets the largely Christian south, and thus the focal point of tensions between indigenous groups, mostly Christian or animist, and Muslim migrants and settlers from the north, who are vying for control of fertile farmlands and for economic and political power.

Tensions are also heightened – and, it is feared, being exploited – ahead of next year's elections. Goodluck Jonathan, a southern Christian and Nigeria's president, is seeking to extend his mandate despite a pact in the ruling party to rotate power between the north and the south of the country

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/nigeria/8227021/Riot-police-out-on-streets-in-Nigerian-city.html>

Nigeria: At least 38 killed in Xmas Eve attacks

By AHMED MOHAMMED and NJADVARA MUSA

The Associated Press

Saturday, December 25, 2010

JOS, Nigeria -- Multiple explosions in central Nigeria have killed 32 people and six others died in attacks by Muslim sect members on two churches in the north, officials said Saturday.

Police spokesman Mohammed Lerama said that 32 people died and at least 74 were injured in four bomb blasts Friday night that went off in close succession in different parts of Jos in central Nigeria - a region violently divided between Christians and Muslims.

Manasie Phampe, the Red Cross secretary in Jos, gave slightly different figures and said that 52 people were injured, and that some of the injured were in intensive care at the Jos University Teaching Hospital.

"We have commenced investigations and are making efforts to calm people down," said Lerama.

Religious violence has claimed over 500 lives this year in Jos and neighboring towns and villages, but the situation was believed to have calmed down.

Nigeria, a country of 150 million people, is almost evenly split between Muslims in the north and the predominantly Christian south. The blasts happened in central Nigeria, in the nation's "middle belt," where dozens of ethnic groups vie for control of fertile lands.

The violence, though fractured across religious lines, often has more to do with local politics, economics and rights to grazing lands. The government of Plateau State, where Jos is the capital, is controlled by Christian politicians who have blocked Muslims from being legally recognized as citizens. That has locked many out of prized government jobs in a region where the tourism industry and tin mining have collapsed in the last decades.

"What has happened on the eve of Christmas is unfortunate, especially at this time when we want to ensure peace and security in the state," said Gregory Yenlong, the state commissioner for information. He said that nobody had claimed responsibility for Friday's attacks in Jos.

This is the first major attack in Jos since the Plateau State government lifted a curfew on May 20. The curfew had first been imposed in November 2008 during postelection violence but it was extended in January following clashes between Christian and Muslim groups.

More than 300 people- mostly Muslim - were killed in the January violence in Jos and surrounding villages.

The curfew improved the security within a city that has hosted numerous peace conferences to address the violence but the killings continued outside.

Twelve people were gruesomely murdered in March in a small Christian village, attackers cutting out most of their victims' tongues and there are still regular attacks outside Jos.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/12/25/AR2010122500339.html>

Nigeria, impotente ante la violencia contra los cristianos



Una familia cristiana en un campo de refugiados de Jos, Nigeria

25 Diciembre 10 - Lagos - La Razón

Así las cosas, tras los choques registrados este fin de semana en la ciudad nigeriana de Jos, el Gobierno se ha visto obligado a enviar tanques y tropas para reforzar la seguridad tras una serie de atentados –en total nueve bombas– que dejaron al menos 38 muertos y 74 heridos durante la pasada Nochebuena, la mayoría en lugares concurridos y en iglesias, lo que ha alimentado los comentarios de que podrían ser obra del grupo radical islámico Boko Haram, aunque nadie ha asumido la autoría.

Nuevos incidentes

La presencia militar en la región, sin embargo, no ha evitado que ayer mismo se produjeran nuevos enfrentamientos entre grupos armados musulmanes y cristianos en Jos. Según un reportero de la agencia Reuters, varios edificios fueron incendiados mientras decenas de incontrolados huían ante la llegada de la Policía y las unidades militares, dejando decenas de heridos cubiertos de sangre a los que sus familiares trataban de evacuar a los hospitales más cercanos.

En esta región se han producido este año más de 500 muertos por la violencia étnicorreligiosa, que muchos ven también como una excusa para fomentar el caos en todo el país. El gobernador del estado de Plateau, del que es capital la ciudad de Jos, dijo esta semana que los atentados tenían una motivación política y estaban dirigidos a enfrentar a cristianos y musulmanes para provocar una nueva ronda de violencia en todo el país.

Los conflictos que tienen como protagonistas a cristianos y musulmanes en Nigeria se han cobrado la vida de más de 13.000 personas desde 1999, cuando acabaron los Gobiernos militares en el país. En octubre, el ejecutivo nigeriano destacó unidades militares en Maiduguri, para frenar las actividades de Boko Haram, que asesinó a varios policías, funcionarios e incluso dirigentes religiosos opuestos a la secta.

Investigación en marcha

El presidente Goodluck Jonathan, aseguró ayer que «el Gobierno hará todo lo posible para descubrir a los responsables de estos hechos» y «llevarlos ante la Justicia», al tiempo que manifestaba su dolor y tristeza y ofrecía sus condolencias a los familiares de las víctimas. Mientras, la presencia de los uniformados en Jos ha frenado los actos de violencia, al menos temporalmente.

Entre tanto, la organización Amnistía Internacional ha mostrado su preocupación por la posibilidad de que se produzcan nuevos ataques contra los cristianos en Irak y ha pedido al Gobierno de Nuri al Maliki que haga más esfuerzos para proteger a esta comunidad de los ataques de los grupos islamistas.

El director de Amnistía para Oriente Medio y África del Norte, Malcolm Smart, mostró ayer su temor a que «los militantes sean propensos a intentar graves ataques contra los cristianos en el periodo de Navidad por máxima publicidad y para avergonzar al Gobierno», informa Servimedia.

Según Amnistía, desde mediados de 2004 hasta finales de 2009 se registraron 65 incidentes violentos contra iglesias cristianas en Irak. Una violencia que se ha recrudecido desde el 31 de octubre, cuando un grupo armado –el autodenominado Estado Islámico de Irak, vinculado a Al Qaida– tomó como rehenes a un centenar de fieles en la iglesia de Nuestra Señora de la Salvación y mató a más de 40 cuando las fuerzas de seguridad intentaron liberarlos.

<http://www.larazon.es/noticia/7912-decenas-de-muertos-en-varias-explisiones-en-el-centro-de-nigeria>

La violencia sectaria se cobra 38 vidas en Nigeria

AGENCIAS - Lagos / Jos - 26/12/2010

Al menos 32 personas murieron y más de 70 resultaron heridas de gravedad durante la celebración de la Nochebuena al explotar siete artefactos de fabricación casera en Jos (centro del país), informó ayer la policía local. Otras seis personas perdieron la vida en tres ataques contra iglesias en Maiduguri (norte).

El norte del país es escenario de periódicos brotes de violencia entre la mayoría musulmana y la minoría cristiana, que han costado la vida a más de 13.000 personas en 10 años.

Nadie se ha atribuido la autoría de los ataques del viernes, aunque autoridades locales apuntan en el segundo caso al grupo extremista musulmán Boko Haram, muy activo en Maiduguri. El pasado enero, 326 personas murieron en Jos tras la incursión de una tribu musulmana de etnia fulani contra un pueblo cristiano.

http://www.elpais.com/articulo/internacional/violencia/sectaria/cobra/38/vidas/Nigeria/elpepiint/20101226elpepiint_10/Tes

Benoît XVI dénonce les attaques contre des chrétiens perpétrées à Noël

LEMONDE.FR avec AFP | 26.12.10 | 13h31



Le pape Benoît XVI a déploré les *"violences absurdes"* perpétrées à la veille de Noël contre les chrétiens après les récentes attaques contre des églises au Nigeria et aux Philippines. *"J'ai appris avec une grande tristesse l'attentat dans une église catholique des Philippines, pendant la célébration de Noël, tout comme les attaques contre des églises chrétiennes au Nigeria"*, a déclaré le pape, dimanche 26 décembre, après la prière de l'angélus prononcée depuis la fenêtre de ses appartements, place Saint-Pierre.

Plusieurs églises ont été visées par des attaques à la veille de Noël au Nigeria, notamment dans le nord du pays, à Maiduguri, où quatre fidèles et un pasteur ont été tués dans une église baptiste, selon l'armée. Ces attaques sont les dernières violences en date attribuées à la secte islamiste Boko Haram, dont le soulèvement l'an dernier et l'affrontement avec les forces de l'ordre avaient fait des centaines de morts.

Par ailleurs, 32 personnes sont mortes et 74 blessées, beaucoup alors qu'elles faisaient leurs courses de Noël, dans sept explosions en deux endroits de la ville de Jos, qui marque la limite entre le nord majoritairement musulman et le sud principalement chrétien.

Aux Philippines, six personnes ont été légèrement blessées dans l'explosion d'une bombe durant la messe de Noël de l'église d'une base de la police philippine sur l'île de Jolo.

"SÉCURITÉ ET SÉRÉNITÉ"

"La Terre s'est encore tâchée de sang dans d'autres parties du monde comme au Pakistan", a ajouté le Pape, exprimant ses "sincères condoléances aux victimes de ces absurdes violences". Plus de 40 personnes ont été tuées le jour de Noël dans un attentat contre un centre de distribution du Programme alimentaire mondial de l'ONU, tandis que des raids d'hélicoptères dans une zone tribale du Nord-Ouest ont provoqué la mort de 40 insurgés.

Regrettant que *"le monde soit encore marqué par la violence, spécialement contre les disciples du Christ"*, Benoît XVI a appelé *"à abandonner la voie de la haine pour trouver des solutions pacifiques aux conflits et donner aux chères populations la sécurité et la sérénité"*. Samedi, dans son traditionnel [message de Noël](#), le pape avait déjà appelé à la résolution des conflits dans le monde, notamment en Israël et en Côte d'Ivoire, et demandé aux responsables politiques une *"solidarité active"* avec les chrétiens persécutés du Moyen-Orient.

http://www.lemonde.fr/europe/article/2010/12/26/benoit-xvi-denonce-les-attaques-contre-des-chretiens-perpetrees-a-noel_1457920_3214.html

Nigerian Villages and Churches Are Struck in Deadly Attacks

By REUTERS

Published: December 25, 2010

JOS, Nigeria (Reuters) — Explosions in Nigeria's central region killed 32 people on Friday, and six people died in attacks on two churches in the northeast of the country, officials said Saturday.

On Friday night, a series of bombs were detonated during Christmas Eve celebrations in villages near the central city of Jos, killing at least 32 people, the state police commissioner said; more than 50 were wounded in the attacks.

Nigeria's army chief, Azubuike Ihejirika, described "a series of bomb blasts" that he said did not seem related to the religious clashes that flare up sporadically between the country's Muslim and Christian populations, roughly equal in size.

"That is terrorism," Mr. Ihejirika said. "It's a very unfortunate incident."

At the start of the year, hundreds of people died in religious and ethnic clashes in Nigeria's central region, where the mostly Muslim north meets the predominantly Christian south.

The attacks come at a difficult time for President Goodluck Jonathan, who is running a controversial campaign ahead of his governing party's primaries on Jan. 13.

The internal rules for his bloc, the People's Democratic Party, dictate that the party leadership rotate between northern and southern factions every two terms. Mr. Jonathan is a southerner who inherited office when President [Umaru Yar'Adua](#), a northerner, died during his first term this year, and some northern factions in the governing party are opposed to his candidacy.

Mr. Jonathan faces a challenge from former Vice President Atiku Abubakar for the party's nomination to run for president, and some fear any unrest in Nigeria will be exploited by rivals during campaigning.

In the attacks on two churches, which appeared to be religiously motivated, at least six people were killed in the northeastern city of Maiduguri.

Attackers threw gasoline bombs late Friday at a church in the city, killing five people, including a Baptist pastor. A security guard at a nearby church died in a similar assault.

http://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/26/world/africa/26nigeria.html?_r=1&scp=1&sq=jos&st=cs
[e](#)

Iraqi Christians Exercise Caution for Christmas

Shiho Fukada for The New York Times

By [JOHN LELAND](#)

Published: December 24, 2010

BAGHDAD — As they gathered to celebrate the birth of Jesus, the congregation here first contemplated death, represented by a spare Christmas tree decked with paper stars, each bearing a photograph of a member of a nearby church killed in a siege by Islamic militants in October.

The congregants on Friday night were fewer than 100, in a sanctuary built for four or five times as many. But they were determined. This year, even more than in the past, Iraqi's dwindling Christian minority had reasons to stay home for Christmas.

"Yes, we are threatened, but we will not stop praying," the Rev. Meyassr al-Qasbotros told the Christmas Eve crowd at the Sacred Church of Jesus, a Chaldean Catholic church. "We do not want to leave the country because we will leave an empty space."

He added: "Be careful not to hate the ones killing us because they know not what they are doing. God forgive them."

Throughout [Iraq](#), churches canceled or toned down Christmas observances this year, both in response to threats of violence and in honor of the nearly 60 Christians killed in October, when militants stormed a Syrian Catholic church and blew themselves up. Since the massacre, more than 1,000 Christian families have fled Baghdad for the Kurdistan region in northern Iraq, with others going to Jordan or Syria or Turkey. Though the exact size of Iraq's Christian population is unclear, by some estimates it has fallen to about 500,000 from a high of 1.4 million before the American-led invasion of 2003. Iraq's total population is about 30 million.

This week, a new threat appeared on a Web site that said it represented the Islamic State of Iraq, a militant group that claimed responsibility for the October church siege. The Web site referred to a church in Egypt that it said was holding two women because they had converted to Islam, and vowed more carnage. "We swear to God, if there are only two of us left," the text read, "one of the two will keep fighting you."

Churches in Kirkuk, Mosul and Basra canceled or curtailed services for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, and warned congregations not to hold parties or mount displays. In Baghdad, decorations were seen in stores, but many churches scaled back or held only prayer sessions.

While Our Lady of Salvation, the church attacked in October, was among those that canceled services for Christmas Eve, it planned to hold services on Saturday. The Epiphany Dominican Convent canceled midnight Mass and then early Mass on Christmas morning so worshippers could avoid risky travel at vulnerable times. During the week, the church moved one Mass to a convent, so the nuns would not have to travel in religious dress.

“People are lost,” said the Rev. Rami Simon, one of five brothers at the convent. “They don’t know where they live now. Is this Iraq?”

For those who dare to attend services, he said: “I say, you must accept to live like the first Christians. They celebrated in a cave, and no one knew about it. So we are not the first to live it.”

But he added: “If I wasn’t a priest, I would not stay one minute in Iraq. As a priest, I find myself a missionary in my country. And some stay because we are here.”

At the Sacred Church of Jesus, attendance has dropped by half since October, Father Qaspotros said. He said he offered this reply to people who tell him they are afraid to come to church: “You are not supposed to be afraid. You are supposed to connect with God, and death is not the last step. If we die, we survive for God.”

For Faez Shakur, 25, who attended Father Qaspotros’s service on Christmas Eve, this was the message he took away. “Whenever there is disaster,” he said, “it means a new day, a new life.” When he saw the tree decorated with the faces of the dead, he cried, he said. But he was where he belonged, he said. “We don’t have anything else,” he said, “just to pray and continue.”

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/25/world/middleeast/25iraq.html?scp=5&sq=christian&st=cse>

Nigeria, attacco ai cristiani: decine di morti

Nel mirino due chiese nel nord-est del paese. Esplosioni nella città di Jos. La Farnesina convoca ambasciatore

Alternate HTML content should be placed here. This content requires the Adobe Flash Player. Get Flash JOS (NIGERIA) - Almeno sei persone sono rimaste uccise in attacchi compiuti alla vigilia di Natale contro due chiese nel nord-est della Nigeria, dove altre 20 persone sono rimaste uccise in diverse esplosioni a Jos teatro di violenti scontri tra cristiani e musulmani nel recente passato. Lo rivelano fonti ufficiali. Negli attacchi a Jos «ci sono stati 32 morti e 74 feriti», secondo il commissario Abdulrahman Akano, responsabile dello stato di Plateau, citato dall'Afp.

TALEBANI - Uomini armati sospettati di appartenere alla setta Boko Haram, i "talebani" nigeriani, hanno sferrato tre attacchi contro chiese, ha precisato un portavoce dell'esercito. «In un attacco compiuto contro una chiesa battista nella regione di Alamderi cinque fedeli tra i quali un pastore sono stati uccisi da uomini armati sospettati d' appartenere alla setta Boko Haram» ha dichiarato il tenente Abubakar Abdullahi, aggiungendo che questo attacco è avvenuto nella città di Maiduguri, ritenuta un feudo dei talebani. In un'altra parte di questa città, una guardia di sicurezza è stata uccisa da altri sospetti membri della setta Boko Haram, che hanno attaccato un'altra chiesa, ha aggiunto il portavoce. Soldati nigeriani, secondo la stessa fonte, sono riusciti ad impedire un altro attacco contro una terza chiesa a Maiduguri.

FARNESINA - Intanto l'ambasciatore nigeriano a Roma verrà a breve convocato alla Farnesina per ribadire la ferma condanna delle violenze in Nigeria e sarà rappresentata la forte aspettativa italiana che le Autorità nigeriane si adoperino prontamente per far cessare l'ondata di intolleranza. Lo si apprende al ministero degli Esteri. Sempre per le prossime ore è previsto anche un passo dell'ambasciatore italiano ad Abuja, Roberto Colaminè, volto ad esprimere la viva preoccupazione italiana e ad acquisire dettagliati elementi sulla situazione nelle varie regioni del territorio nigeriano.

http://www.corriere.it/esteri/10_dicembre_25/nigeria-cristiani_dedd5b12-102f-11e0-93e1-00144f02aabc.shtml

Casi 40 muertos en ataques a cristianos en Nigeria en vísperas de Navidad

Una cadena de explosiones sacuden varias aldeas cerca de la ciudad de Jos.- Atacadas dos iglesias en el noreste del país

REUTERS - Jos - 25/12/2010

Una cadena de explosiones en el centro y noreste de Nigeria han dejado al menos 38 muertos la víspera de Navidad. La Policía del estado central de Plateau ha explicado que los atentados registrados en Jos se produjeron en aldeas cercanas a la ciudad y tuvieron como objetivo celebraciones de Nochebuena. Aquí han perdido la vida 32 personas y unas 74 se encuentran en estado crítico. Asimismo, sendos ataques a dos iglesias en el noreste del país han dejado seis muertos.

El jefe del Ejército, Azubuike Ihejirika, descartó que los atentados guarden relación con enfrentamientos religiosos que sacuden de forma esporádica la zona centro de Nigeria, donde se unen el norte, de mayoría musulmana, y el sur, principalmente cristiano. "Fue terrorismo, es un muy desafortunado incidente", ha dicho, en declaraciones desde la ciudad meridional de Port Harcourt.

Por otra parte, un grupo de personas lanzó cócteles molotov a última hora del viernes contra una iglesia de Maiduguri. Murieron cinco personas, entre ellas un pastor baptista, mientras que un segundo ataque en un centro cercano provocó una sexta víctima mortal.

El gobernador del estado de Borno, Ali Sheriff, consideró "preocupante" esta situación y advirtió de que las autoridades "harán todo lo que puedan para detener a los autores" de estas agresiones. "Debemos asegurarnos de que todos los ciudadanos dispongan de la seguridad adecuada para rendir culto de forma libre y sin miedo", añadió.

El presidente Goodluck Jonathan, por su parte, ha condenado hoy los ataques y ha enviado sus condolencias a las familias de las víctimas. "Garantizo a todos los nigerianos que descubriremos a quienes están detrás de las explosiones de Jos y los detendremos para que se enfrenten a la justicia", ha dicho Jonathan en la capital nigeriana Abuja.

http://www.elpais.com/articulo/internacional/muertos/ataques/cristianos/Nigeria/visperas/Navidad/elpepuint/20101225elpepuint_17/Tes

Plusieurs attaques contre des églises au Nigeria, à la veille de Noël

LEMONDE.FR avec AFP et AP | 25.12.10 | 11h31 • Mis à jour le 25.12.10 | 17h30

L'armée a recensé trois attaques contre des églises du nord du Nigeria, à Maiduguri, vendredi soir 24 décembre, tuant six personnes. Une explosion à Jos, dans le centre du pays, a par ailleurs fait trente-deux morts, selon un dernier bilan policier.

Six personnes ont été tuées et une église a été incendiée par des islamistes présumés dans le nord majoritairement musulman du Nigeria, le soir de Noël, a déclaré samedi un porte-parole de l'armée nigérienne. Des hommes armés suspectés d'appartenir à la secte Boko Haram ont mené trois attaques contre des églises, a précisé le porte-parole.

"Dans une attaque menée contre une église baptiste dans la région d'Alamderi, cinq fidèles dont un pasteur ont été tués par des hommes armés suspectés d'appartenir à la secte Boko Haram", a déclaré le lieutenant Abubakar Abdullahi, ajoutant que cette attaque avait eu lieu dans la ville de Maiduguri, considérée comme un "fief" taliban.

Dans une autre partie de cette ville, un garde de sécurité a été tué par d'autres membres présumés de la secte Boko Haram, qui ont attaqué une autre église. Des soldats nigériens ont réussi à empêcher une autre attaque visant une troisième église à Maiduguri.

BOKO HARAM

Au cours des cinq derniers mois, plus de cinquante personnes, dont des policiers, des soldats, des religieux, des chefs locaux et des politiciens ont été tués à Maiduguri, par des hommes circulant à moto et qui appartiendraient à la secte Boko Haram, qui affirme vouloir instaurer un Etat islamiste "pur".

Des militaires sont stationnés à Maiduguri à la suite des dernières poussées de violence. En juillet 2009, la secte qui se réclame des talibans d'Afghanistan et dont le nom en langue haoussa signifie "*l'éducation occidentale est un péché*", comptait des milliers de partisans. Elle avait alors mené une offensive coordonnée contre des commissariats dans plusieurs Etats du nord. Les affrontements avec les forces de l'ordre, particulièrement intenses à Maiduguri où le QG de la secte avait été détruit, avaient alors fait plus de 800 morts en quelques jours.

VIOLENCES INTER-RELIGIEUSES DANS LE CENTRE

Par ailleurs, trente-deux personnes ont été tuées vendredi dans une série d'explosions au centre du Nigeria, à Jos, dans une région où les tensions sont vives entre communautés chrétienne et musulmane, selon la police. "*Nous avons eu 32 tués et 74 blessés*", a annoncé le commissaire Abdulrahman Akano, responsable de la région du Plateau, précisant qu'il y avait

eu un total de sept explosions. Un précédent bilan faisait état de huit morts. Les circonstances et la cause de ces explosions n'ont pas été précisées.

Les autorités ont refusé de faire le lien entre les attaques anti-chrétiennes à Maiduguri et les explosions de Jos, mais le commissaire pour l'information publique de l'Etat du Plateau, Gregory Yenlong, a indiqué avoir connaissance de rumeurs concernant des attaques visant des célébrations de Noël.

Dans un communiqué, le président du Nigeria Goodluck Jonathan a promis que les auteurs des violences seraient jugés et a exprimé "*sa tristesse*".

http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2010/12/25/le-nigeria-endeuille-par-deux-attaques-a-la-veille-de-noel_1457714_3212.html

No Christmas festivities for some Iraq Christians

By Mustafa Mahmoud

KIRKUK, Iraq | Wed Dec 22, 2010 11:08am EST

(Reuters) - Some church leaders in Iraq have told Christians not to celebrate Christmas except with prayer after lethal attacks and continuing threats by militants against the Iraqi Christian community.

"No Santa Claus, no celebrations, no gifts this year," Archbishop Louis Sako, chairman of the Chaldean archbishops in Kirkuk and Sulaimaniya, said on Wednesday. "We don't have the right to jeopardize others' lives."

In a new threat published on an Islamist website, the local affiliate of al Qaeda threatened more attacks against Iraqi Christians.

Insurgent attacks have panicked Iraq's minority Christian community. Thousands have fled to the semi-autonomous northern Kurdish region or overseas.

In the worst attack, 52 people were killed when security forces stormed Our Lady of Salvation Catholic church in Baghdad after militants took hostages during Sunday mass on October 31. Iraqi authorities said they had arrested 12 suspected al Qaeda members in connection with the assault.

"We are still deeply wounded from what happened in Our Lady of Salvation church," Sako said. "We saw innocent people brutally killed while praying to God, so how can we celebrate?"

"We will not celebrate this year. We will only pray to God asking for peace to prevail in our country."

The church attack renewed fears that Sunni Islamist militants were trying to drive Christians out of their homeland.

The U.N. refugee agency said last week that some 1,000 Christian families, roughly 6,000 people, had fled to Iraqi Kurdistan from Baghdad, Mosul and other areas.

A U.N. official said Christians in the Iraqi capital and in Mosul, which is considered al Qaeda's last urban stronghold, have started a slow but steady exodus.

In its latest threat, the Islamic State of Iraq, the local affiliate of al Qaeda, said Iraqi Christians risked further attacks unless they pressured the Christian church in Egypt to release a group of people it said the church was holding after they had converted to Islam.

The al Qaeda wing also warned Iraqi Christians against proselytizing and fraternizing with occupation forces.

Mukhlis Kyriakos, a priest at Our Lady of Salvation, said the decision to limit festivities was made in part because of ongoing threats from militants, who had warned parishioners not to use traditional methods to honor those killed.

"The Archbishop Council of Iraq decided that celebrations are to be limited to prayers at churches only. No celebrations, no parties," he said.

"We are still receiving threats from terrorists. Even families of those killed inside the church were threatened that if they hang a banner marking their lost relatives, their houses will be blown up."

<http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE6BL2TX20101222>