



3.21.2011

NIGERIA After failed bomb attacks, political violence erupts in Jos, Plateau State

Three would-be bombers died when a bomb they were carrying exploded prematurely yesterday in Jos, Plateau State.

According to eyewitnesses, the men targeted the Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) in Angwan Rukuba Junction, Nasarrawa Gwong, just as congregations attending the English Sunday services at both the ECWA Church and the nearby Church of Christ in Nigeria (COCIN) were about to leave, and those attending the Hausa services were arriving. Had the device exploded as intended, it would have occasioned maximum loss of life.

Also on Sunday, the congregation of the Mountain of Fire and Miracles Church on Jengre Road in Jos also escaped unharmed when a bomb planted on the premises by two men on a motorcycle failed to detonate. However, this time the bombers escaped.

Plateau State has been wracked by episodes of sectarian violence since 2001. The latest spate of violence erupted on January 18, 2010, when around 200 armed Fulani youths claiming to be undertaking repairs on a house attacked church goers, churches and Christian homes.

In news just reaching Christian Solidarity Worldwide, Jos residents are reporting heavy gunfire in the area around Jos Polo Fields as supporters of the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) Party led by former head of state General Mohamed Buhari reportedly clash with the youths and general populace of the Polo, Gada Biya and Jenta Adamu areas. As yet there are no figures on casualties. In January, CPC supporters participated in attacks in the Bauchi Road area of Jos that targeted non-Muslims on four major streets. The victims included at least 40 members of the eastern Nigerian Igbo tribe travelling by bus from the southern city of Lagos to Yola in Adamawa State, who were dragged from the vehicle, mutilated, and set on fire.

Gunfire was also reported after the body of a youth was discovered on a football field in Down Base, Farin Gada.

CSW Advocacy Director Andrew Johnston said: "While we celebrate the fact that many lives were spared by the failure of these bombs to detonate as intended, it is deeply regrettable that these men were prepared to carry out carnage against their fellow citizens purely on account of their religion. News of the current violence involving the CPC is also deeply concerning. It is unacceptable that once again supporters of the CPC may again be involved in deadly skirmishes with the local population. We hope the security services move swiftly to halt this latest outbreak involving CPC supporters, ensuring that in future, rallies by this party are tightly monitored and policed. We also hope they track down those behind Sunday's attempted bombings as a matter of urgency in order to prevent further attacks on innocent civilians".