



Jos Jottings, April 2025

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his faithful ones (Psalm 116:15)

How do we deal with the news of suffering and death?

Sometimes, if you are like me, when confronted with all the suffering and needs we see in the world, and the persecution of Christians, we may feel overwhelmed. That is often my own first reaction when continually confronted by more and more of the same news of horrendous attacks on innocent impoverished rural villagers in predominantly Christian communities in northeast Nigeria. I also personally feel a bit like an annoying cracked bell when I need to bring you yet more news of the deadly persecution our sisters and brothers in Jos Diocese and Plateau State are facing. I dearly wish I could bring you better news! But at times like this, when our world and media in general do not want to hear or know, it is important that we know the trials our sisters and brothers are facing, and hold them up in our prayers. And it is important we remain confidently hopeful for them, because like them our hope rests on our confidence in the compassionate heart of the Lord Jesus for the oppressed and broken-hearted, and his power to turn even ashes into joy. And that's where this wonderful verse from Psalm 116 speaks to us: the sight of the death of his precious children taps into our God's heart at the very deepest and most profound level. Their security with him and in his love is absolutely certain.

Post-Ramadan massacres in Plateau State ...

Can I say at the outset that not all Fulani Muslims are militants or terrorists guilty of massacres. In fact in many instances, rural communities in Nigeria that have been attacked specifically say that their attackers, although Fulani, were not local Fulani known to them, but Fulani with distinctly non-local accents, probably recruited from further north. That said, it is Fulani Muslim extremists who are being recruited, organised and deployed to commit atrocities. And despite the relative lull in attacks in Plateau State over the Christmas/New Year period, two waves of attacks took place immediately after the end of the Islamic fasting month of Ramadan in Nigeria on 30 March.

Over the nights 2-3 April, Fulani attacks on seven predominantly Christian villages in Bokkos Local Government Area south of Jos City resulted in over 60 dead, with villages burned and food stores and homes looted. Plateau State Governor Caleb Mutfwang (photo from his press conference) and Amnesty Nigeria publicly and forthrightly condemned these, explicitly describing them as coordinated ethnic cleansing, genocide and entirely unprovoked attacks.



Then in a series of night attacks on predominantly Christian villages in the Bassa Local Government Area

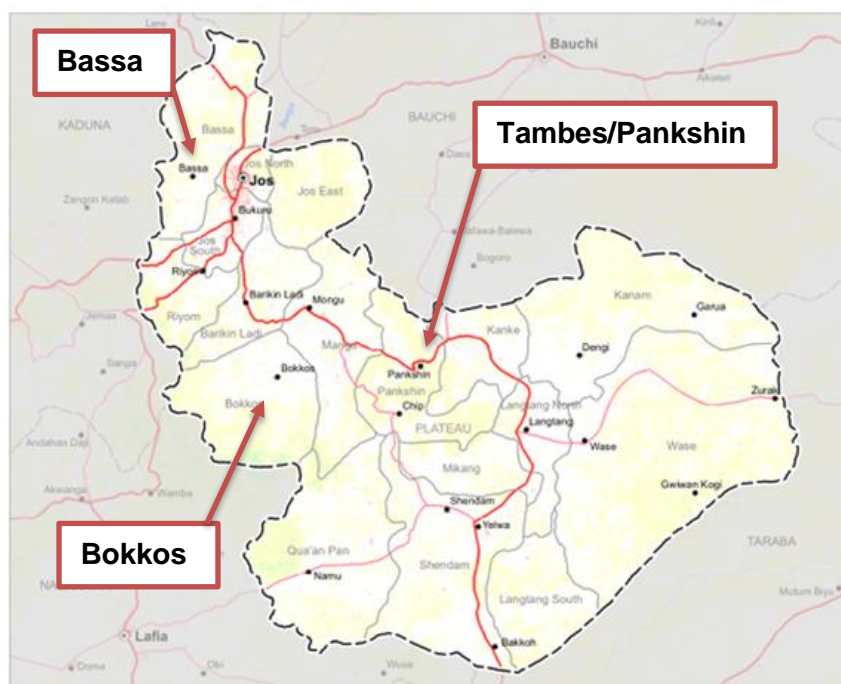


northwest of Jos City in the period 8-14 April, over 51 people were killed, houses burned and food stores and possessions looted. The worst of these attacks happened on Palm Sunday near and around Kwall (Zike) village. I personally visited Kwall in May 2024, and it falls under the pastoral care of my friend Archdeacon Godwin Makabi, the Anglican Archdeacon of Bassa District, who sent me his personal account of events. Another friend, Archdeacon Mark Mukan, the head of the Jos Diocese Relief and Welfare Department, has also sent me his account of the mass burial of the 51 victims and subsequent meetings with survivors and traumatized families (photo). Many of the other photos he sent are

simply too confronting to share with you, but the scenes and encounters with survivors brought him to tears. I have visited this community, my friends are front-line ministers there: please forgive me if this is personal for me! But so also is my thanks to the many of you who contribute so generously to ongoing emergency relief for these devastated communities. (Mark Mukan with a trauma counselling group of women survivors below).



Zambiri School Pankshin/Tambes Campus



Although the Bokkos attacks occurred just some 40kms west of the new Pankshin/ Tambes campus of Zambiri School, a further campaign of mud-brick production ready for the next major burst of building and construction is under way at present. This will generate the bricks needed for the site perimeter security wall, and for construction to start on student hostels and classrooms. But this is dependent on favourable security and weather conditions, as well as availability of labour and building materials, so please uphold it in prayer!

Christian Institute, Jos: the mission ...

One of the front-line Anglican workers in the attacked Kwall community in Bassa LGA is a young married catechist who is hoping to start formal pastoral training at the Christian Institute, Jos, shortly. Our

Partnership support of these trainees is hugely strategic in supporting persecuted rural communities!

For prayer:

- Please pray for the Nigerian federal authorities to direct renewed army, police and judicial efforts to protect rural communities, end the genocidal ethnic cleansing, and hold Fulani perpetrators accountable, in response to appeals from church leaders, Governor Mutfwang and Amnesty Nigeria.
- Keep praying that the local security situation and funds availability will enable construction work and mud-brick production to go ahead quickly at Tambes, so that the student hostel buildings, the perimeter security wall, and water supply are finished soon, and the residential school community can move in.
- Keep praying also for the strategic, effective, and godly work of the Christian Institute, Jos, and its faculty.

To make a tax-deductible donation to Diocesan partnership projects for training at the Christian Institute, or to support our persecuted fellow-Christians in Plateau State in Nigeria, or ministry to “at risk” children through the Tambes campus of the Zambiri School, go to <https://anglicanaid.org.au/locations/Nigeria> , and select the project of your preference. To book a presentation on the situation in Nigeria and our partnership with Jos Diocese for your church, school or fellowship group, contact Rev Canon Patrick Cole on pandncole@bigpond.com .