



## **Jos Jottings, July 2023** **“How long, O Lord?”**

In Psalm 13:1-6 the psalmist, and in Revelation 6:10 the martyred saints, cry out respectively to our loving Lord to show his powerful steadfast love and to bring his justice to this broken world. And that is surely the cry of our sisters and brothers in Jos Diocese, Plateau State, again this past month. While there have been joys – including Archbishop Ben and Mama Gloria’s return to Jos on 13 July with confirmation of continuing remission from cancer for Ben – the serious long-term impact of continuing coordinated Fulani militant attacks on multiple villages in Mangu Local Government Area south of Jos has been growing. On the other hand, there are some signs that at long last government and security forces may be starting to act to protect persecuted communities. These are matters for prayer, praise, and for generous action under our diocesan partnership!

### **Ongoing attacks on Christian communities in Plateau State**

Last month, I reported unprovoked coordinated and deadly attacks by bands of armed Fulani Islamic extremists on mainly Christian villages during May/June in the Riyom, Barkin Ladi and Mangu Local Government Areas south of the Plateau State capital, Jos.

Ongoing reporting confirms that over 300 Christians (including two pastors) were killed, up to 30,000 residents displaced, and 8 churches and up to 2,000 homes destroyed in May/June in a coordinated wave of Fulani attacks on 20 villages in the Mangu Local Government Area.

In response to 4 July reports that a group of up to several hundred terrorists were massing in the ethnic Fulani settlement of Bangai (in Riyom LGA), on 9 July Caleb Mutfwang (the incoming Governor of Plateau State) imposed a 24-hour curfew on neighbouring Mangu LGA, in an attempt to restore order, while army reinforcements were also deployed.

The website Truth Nigeria has reported (very welcome) strong condemnatory comments by Governor Mutfwang, denouncing the attacks as an organized effort to ethnically cleanse Christian residents from a majority-Christian state. “What we are seeing is clear orchestrated genocide,” said Mutfwang. “What we are seeing is a plan to wipe out numbers of [Christians]. A situation where people are sleeping in their houses and are killed in the night cannot be said to be a clash,” he said, rebutting public claims (including by the US State Department) of the attacks being just ongoing clashes between local farmers and herders.

Truth Nigeria also reported in July of intelligence suggesting that a wholesale “invasion” of Mangu, Barkin Ladi, Riyom, Jos South and Bassa LGA’s was being planned by a group of Fulani herdsman, joined by jihadists and mercenaries recruited from across Nigeria and beyond. And further attacks continued. Truth Nigeria also reported Nigerian officials saying that as of 24 July Mangu LGA alone is housing some 80,000 internally-displaced persons (IDPs) in 11 temporary camps, 18,000 in the grounds of a primary school, largely supported by local church donations. These numbers of displaced and killed – from just one state of Nigeria – are amazing, and the support burden placed on local churches is huge. Just imagine if we were to experience that level of loss of life, destruction, and displacement of people anywhere in Australia! Please pray that these initial signs of long-awaited Nigerian Government and security force intervention on the side of the persecuted will bear fruit.

## Plateau State Governor Caleb Mutfwang



Meanwhile, work continues to:

- lay the foundations of new classrooms at the Christian Institute Jos; and,
- develop the plans and undertake the initial construction phase of the new Pankshin/Tambes campus of the Zambiri School outreach to disadvantaged and orphaned children (with many more of these resulting from recent village attacks).

### **For prayer:**

- Praise God for Archbishop Ben Kwashi's mid-July return to Jos in good health, and keep praying for a powerful conclusion to his diocesan ministry in September.
- Pray for the thousands of displaced and traumatised villagers in IDP accommodation after Fulani attacks during June/July on around 30 villages in Riyom, Barkin Ladi, and Mangu Local Government Areas, for their protection and provision of their needs.
- Praise God for the generosity of Australian donors contributing to the current emergency relief needs of Christian communities in Plateau State and beyond.
- Praise God for Governor Mutfwang having bluntly and publicly confronted the rising violence and its ethnic cleansing intention, and for action taken so far to provide protection, mobilise the Nigerian security forces, and engage the federal authorities.
- Pray for this good start to be followed up effectively at all levels of government, and for those planning and perpetrating the violence to be held to account.
- Pray for continuing effective work in Jos Diocese to bring emergency relief supplies and community support to Christians injured, traumatised, left destitute and displaced by these terrorist attacks, and to care for orphaned and at-risk children.

**To make a tax-deductible donation to projects under our Diocesan partnership for training at the Christian Institute, or to support our persecuted fellow-Christians in Jos and Plateau State in Nigeria, go to <https://anglicanaid.org.au/locations/Nigeria> . 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](mailto:pandncole@bigpond.com) .**