



Jos Jottings, March 2023

Elections over, but the violence continues

With the Nigerian Presidential and State Governor elections (25 February and 18 March respectively) over, Nigerians are digesting the implications for the nation and their future security. Governing party candidate Bola Tinubu of the APC (and running on a controversial Muslim/Muslim presidential and vice-presidential ticket) was declared the winner of the presidential poll, ahead of Atiku Abubakar of the opposition PDP, with Labour's Peter Obi (an ethnic Igbo Christian) a close third. In light of historically-low total voter numbers (29% of registered voters, compared with 35% in 2019), voting system breakdowns, and incidents of voter intimidation, violence, and destruction of ballots, Abubakar and Obi are challenging the results in court, alleging massive vote-rigging. Obi won landslide victories in Lagos and Abuja districts, the economic and governance capitals of Nigeria. Due to technical problems with the Presidential elections, State Governor elections were deferred to 18 March, with local and international observers (including from the European Union) saying that the later poll was marked by apathy, after disappointments in the presidential election, but also by intimidation tactics, vote buying and violence.

Christians in Jos and Plateau State are praying that president-elect Tinubu and state governor-elect Caleb Muftwang act quickly and decisively to curb violence and corruption.



**Christian villagers being buried after the 11 March attack on Ugwan Wakili village, southern Kaduna State
(photo from International Christian Concern)**

Unfortunately, politically- and religiously-motivated attacks on Christian communities if anything increased during the elections period in Nigeria's "Middle Belt" and northeast:

- on 25 February (the day of the presidential elections), 4 Christians were reportedly killed by Fulani militants in Benue State when returning from voting, while 7 Christian villages in Borno State complained Boko Haram militants prevented them from voting in support of the opposition Labour (and Christian) candidate Peter Obi, killing two villagers;
- on the night of Saturday 4 March, Church of Christ in the Nations (COCIN) pastor and community leader Musa Hyok and 2 of his sons were reportedly targeted and killed by Muslim Fulani militants in Ganawari village, Riyom Local Government Area in Plateau State, just 30 kms southwest of Jos, allegedly for “failing to vote Muslim”, and for encouraging others to vote for religiously-balanced tickets (see February Jos Jottings);
- on 10 March, more than 30 fishermen and farmers were reportedly killed by Boko Haram terrorists in the village of Dikwa in Borno State, according to a UN spokesman;
- on 11 March, according to police and multiple media reports, suspected Fulani militants killed 17 unarmed Christians in Ugwan Wakili village in Zangon Kataf LGA, Kaduna State, directly west of Plateau State (in Zonkwa Anglican Diocese, led by Bishop Ben’s younger brother, Bishop Jacob Kwashi); and,
- on 14 March, likely the same group of militants attacked Christian communities in Mubushi/Langson villages in the same LGA in southern Kaduna State, just 6 kms from Ugwan Wakili, killing another 10 and wounding 14 with gunfire. Men, women, children and even toddlers were victims, leading to national and UN condemnation.

The latter two attacks were on the home communities of the Labour Party candidate for Governor and the opposition PDP Party’s candidate for Deputy Governor of Kaduna State (both Christians), allegedly to stop likely anti-government voting in the then-imminent elections for state governor. Local residents have also claimed clear collusion between the attackers and local security forces (Nigerian police and army) supposedly deployed to protect them, and a deliberate political and religious ethnic cleansing agenda behind the attacks.

For prayer:

- For swift action by incoming Nigerian President Bola Tinubu and Plateau State Governor Caleb Muftwang to end ethnic violence and religious persecution, hold perpetrators to account before the law, and to protect the innocent.
- God’s continuing protection and the Spirit’s comfort of our Christian sisters and brothers in Jos Diocese and Nigeria more broadly after this election-period violence.
- Wisdom for Bishop Ben as, looking towards retirement, he puts in place succession arrangements, and focusses on ongoing ministries, especially to orphans and the wider Anglican communion.
- For a productive and safe planned 25 April – 1 May liaison visit by Canon Cole to Jos for meetings with Bishop Ben and his team and for project visits.
- Thanks for ongoing opportunities to promote the diocesan partnership in parishes.
- A continuing commitment generously to uphold our sisters and brothers in Nigeria in prayer and financially.

To make a tax-deductible donation to projects under our Diocesan partnership 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 or fellowship group, contact Rev Canon Patrick Cole on pandncole@bigpond.com .