

WORKING PAPER



A DEADLY CYCLE: ETHNO-RELIGIOUS CONFLICT IN JOS, PLATEAU STATE, NIGERIA



By **Jana Krause**

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PHOTO ► Nigerian troops provide security in Jos, Nigeria, January 2010.
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Switzerland

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1202 Geneva
Switzerland

Copy-edited by Tania Inowlocki
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Cartography by Jillian Luff, MAP*gr*afix
Typeset in Meta by Richard Jones (rick@studioexile.com)
Printed by nbmedia, Geneva

ISBN: 978-2-9700771-0-7



The Geneva Declaration

The Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, endorsed by more than 109 countries as of this writing, commits signatories to supporting initiatives intended to measure the human, social, and economic costs of armed violence, to assess risks and vulnerabilities, to evaluate the effectiveness of armed violence reduction programmes, and to disseminate knowledge of best practices. The Declaration calls upon states to achieve measurable reductions in the global burden of armed violence and tangible improvements in human security by 2015. Core group members include Brazil, Colombia, Finland, Guatemala, Indonesia, Kenya, Morocco, the Netherlands, Norway, the Philippines, Spain, Switzerland, Thailand, and the United Kingdom, with the support of the United Nations Development Programme.

Further information about the Geneva Declaration, its activities, and its publications is available at www.genevadeclaration.org.



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List of abbreviations

ANPP	All Nigeria People's Party
CALM	Conflict Abatement through Local Mitigation
CAN	Christian Association of Nigeria
CEPID	Centre for Peace Initiative and Development
DPI	Damietta Peace Initiative
JNI	Jama'atu Nasril Islam
LGA	Local Government Area
PDP	People's Democratic Party
STF	Special Task Force
USAID	United States Agency for International Development



About the author

Jana Krause is a PhD Candidate in international relations and political science at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva, Switzerland. Her doctoral thesis focuses on local violence prevention strategies and resilient communities in communal ‘religious’ conflicts in Ambon, Indonesia, and in Jos, Nigeria. She was a visiting research fellow at the Program on Order, Conflict and Violence at Yale University and at the Center for Security and Peace Studies at Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Previously, she worked for the Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding at the Graduate Institute and for the Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces in Geneva.



Acknowledgements

This study was undertaken by the author with logistical support and advice from the Abuja-based offices of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, the CLEEN Foundation, the Centre for Democracy and Development, the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation.

The author is most grateful to the residents of Jos as well as the journalists, community and religious leaders, NGO representatives, government officials, and volunteer peace activists who took the time to share their views. The research in Jos was partly facilitated by Sister Helena McEvilly and Maji Peterx of the Damietta Peace Initiative (DPI), Nigeria. Special thanks go to Gaius Dacht of DPI for his research and translation assistance.

Robert Muggah and Luigi De Martino provided guidance throughout the writing of this report. The author also extends thanks to the external reviewers, Adam Higazi, Philip Ostien, and Yakubu Joseph, for their valuable comments and suggestions. The report strives to present a neutral and balanced analysis. Responsibility for all views and opinions expressed as well as potential errors remains solely the author's.



Executive summary

Over the last decade, the political crisis over ‘indigene’¹ rights and political representation in Jos, capital of Plateau State, has developed into a protracted communal conflict affecting most parts of the state. At least 4,000 and possibly as many as 7,000 people have been killed since late 2001, when the first major riot in more than three decades broke out in Jos. Ten years later, only the heavy presence of military and police forces ensures a fragile calm in the city. Tensions between ethnic groups rooted in the allocation of resources, electoral competition, fears of religious domination, and contested land rights have amalgamated into an explosive mix. The presence of well-organized armed groups in rural areas, the proliferation of weapons, and the sharp rise in gun fatalities within Jos all point to the real risk of future large-scale violence.

More than 13,500 people have been killed in communal violence since Nigeria returned to civilian rule in 1999 (HRW, 2010a). The ‘Middle Belt’ region, to which Plateau State belongs, is one of the areas worst hit. The 2001 Jos riot claimed at least 1,000 lives (HRW, 2001). Subsequently, long-standing tensions within smaller towns and villages in Plateau State escalated into violence. The killings came to a halt only when the federal government declared a state of emergency in 2004, after about 700 people had been killed in an attack on the town of Yelwa in southern Plateau State (HRW, 2005). Clashes between Muslim and Christian youths rocked the city of Jos again in 2008, killing at least 700. The year 2010 is one of the worst on record, with more than 1,000 lives lost.²

The human cost of the violence is immense. The number of internally displaced persons since 2001 peaked in 2004, with up to 220,000 people displaced (IRIN, 2005). After the 2008 riot, more than 10,000 were displaced, while violence in 2010 resulted in about 18,000 people fleeing the clashes (IRIN, 2010a). Numerous houses in Jos have been burned and blackened remnants litter the streets in many parts of the city. All sides suffer a massive loss due to livelihoods destroyed. Violence and displacement have reshaped Jos and many rural settlements. As neighbourhoods become religiously segregated, ‘no-go areas’ alter patterns of residency, business, transportation, and trade.

This study finds that the historical, regional, and religious dimensions of the Jos crisis are crucial to understanding the protracted nature of the current


conflict situation. Geographically, Jos lies in the centre of Nigeria, between the predominantly Muslim north and the mostly Christian south. The city of Jos was established around tin mining activities during colonial times. It attracted migrants from all parts of Nigeria to work in the mines and with the colonial administration. The colonial legacy of indirect rule initially relied on northern emirate structures. Later, political power was transferred to the 'native' tribes of the Plateau. Among these, the Berom were one of the largest tribes and they most vocally defend 'indigene' rights today. But Hausa migrants from the north constituted by far the most numerous group in early Jos.

Today, the ownership of Jos and claims to 'indigene' status are fiercely contested between the native tribes and the Hausa. Indigene certificates ensure access to political representation and positions within the civil service. Only local governments issue these certificates and therefore decide on indigene status. This arrangement opened the floodgates for the politics of labelling and the selective reciting of historical accounts that foster group boundaries to secure political control over local government areas. Within a socio-political environment characterized by strong patronage networks, exclusion of one fraction of the political elite is widely felt as socio-economic decline among its constituency. The urban conflict dynamics interlink with tensions in rural areas. The increasing scarcity of land and access to riverbanks has resulted in contested claims over land use between indigene farmers and Fulani herders.

Religion reinforces the boundaries between the mostly Christian indigenes and the Muslim Hausa and Fulani in both urban and rural conflicts. In principle, these root causes of the conflict are well understood. Nigerian scholars have elaborated the problem of indigene rights in several publications. Yet there has been a lack of political will to address the situation. The escalation of large-scale urban and rural violence over the past decade contributed to the protracted conflict. A thorough reframing of a once-localized conflict over indigene rights into a religious crisis of regional and national dimension has taken place. Ten years of violent confrontations and the extreme brutality of 2010's massacres around Jos left many residents traumatized. Religious identities have become strongly polarized and one-sided conflict narratives internalized. Despite numerous peace efforts, tensions on the Plateau are at their worst today.

Compounding the tragedy of the Jos crisis, violent clashes are no longer sparked only by deliberate political instigation during election times. In fact, Plateau State remained calm during the April 2011 national and gubernatorial elections, while neighbouring Kaduna, Bauchi, and other northern states were rocked by violent protests. But in Jos, small-scale reprisal and revenge killings have exploded since 2010. The situation is so tense that residents fear that any minor incident could set the town ablaze again.

A long-term solution to the Jos and wider Plateau State crisis will need to tackle the indigene–settler divide. However, given that the conflict over indigene rights is endemic all over Nigeria, Plateau State will hardly arrive at a durable solution on its own. Christian indigenes need only point to the discrimination against fellow Christians in northern, predominantly Muslim states to justify exclusion of the Hausa–Fulani in Jos. The latter constitute Nigeria’s most numerous ethnic group. Plateau’s indigenes feel threatened with marginalization and are not willing to be the first to step down from exclusive indigene privileges.

Religious leaders will have to take responsibility for invalidating the perceptions of existential threat to religious identity that have become entrenched in many people’s daily lives. Top-level religious leaders have preached peace and tolerance, but the message does not trickle down fully. While grassroots initiatives echo their tenor, mid-level religious leaders feel under pressure to protect their communities. People tend to be suspicious of inter-religious dialogue, making it difficult to rebuild trust among communities. Many within the churches and mosques call for a more militant response from their community. The city managed to stay calm during the 2011 elections, but political elites in Jos and Abuja will need to tackle the Jos crisis. A heavy military presence is no durable solution. 



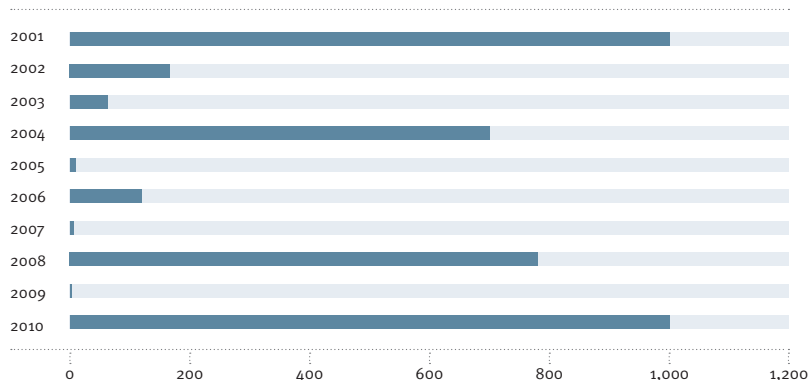
Introduction

When you see your family slaughtered, much of the religious values become irrelevant. You cannot be peaceful anymore.³

According to conservative estimates, at least 4,000 people have been killed in Jos and smaller cities and villages in Plateau State over the past decade. Large-scale riots broke out in Jos over appointments to political offices in September 2001. Less than one week of fighting claimed at least 1,000 lives. The Jos crisis was initially a political confrontation between the Berom supported by the Anaguta and the Afizere, who are among the ethnic groups referred to as ‘indigenes’ of Plateau State, and the Hausa–Fulani, commonly referred to as ‘settlers’. The term Hausa–Fulani refers to the amalgamated Hausa and urban Fulani who also speak Hausa, in contrast to the Fulani cattle herders within Plateau State, who speak Fulfulde and constitute a separate group.⁴ The struggle between the predominantly Christian indigenes and the mostly Muslim Hausa–Fulani soon took on a strong religious dimension, pitching Muslims against Christians.

After the 2001 riot in Jos, long-standing rural land conflicts escalated into violent confrontations. The southern region of Plateau State was worst hit, with local militia groups repeatedly attacking small towns and villages. Given the rural environment, exact casualty numbers are difficult to obtain, yet an estimated 1,000–2,000 people were killed in 2002–04 (see Figure 1). The violence in southern Plateau State culminated in the massacre of an estimated 700 people in the city of Yelwa (HRW, 2005). According to official information from the Plateau State government, about 220,000 people were displaced in 2004 (IRIN, 2005).⁵ This situation led to the imposition of a six-month state of emergency in Plateau State.

Rioting resumed in November 2008, in connection with local government elections in Jos. This time destruction within the city was massive. At least 700 people died in just two days of violence. Entire neighbourhoods were razed to the ground. The psychological impact of the 2008 riot went deep. It resulted in a breakdown of trust, communication and exchange between the communities that has never been fully restored. Residents referred to the violence as ‘a fight to finish’. The year 2009 was one of uneasy calm. Renewed fighting

FIGURE 1 Conservative estimates of casualties in Plateau State, 2001–10**NOTES:**

Victim numbers for rural attacks may have been under-reported in local and international newspapers. Other sources list higher estimates; Higazi (2011) calculates a total death toll of at least 7,000 people for the past decade, with an estimated 5,000 people killed in 2001–04 and another 2,000 in 2008–10.

SOURCES:

HRW (2001; 2005; 2006; 2008; 2010a; 2010b; 2010c; 2011); Krause (2011); unpublished information and memoranda received from local communities in Jos

broke out in Jos in January 2010 over the rebuilding of a house that had been destroyed during the 2008 violence. Ever since, the region has plummeted into a deadly cycle of reprisal and revenge attacks. Numerous small-scale attacks, ‘silent killings’ of individuals discovered in the ‘wrong’ neighbourhood, and two major massacres in villages close to the city mark 2010 as the worst for Jos: at least 1,000 people were killed and more than 18,000 displaced. The series of violent events culminated in the detonation of several bombs on Christmas Eve. Bomb explosions were a novelty to Jos. They sparked yet another round of fighting and revenge killings that lasted well into 2011. At least 200 people were killed between January and April 2011 (HRW, 2011).

Despite a host of peace efforts undertaken by various levels of society, the situation in Plateau State has only worsened. The main political actors in the perpetuated crisis have been on the scene over the last decade. The lack of political will to resolve the crisis has been lamented from all sides. Following the 2001 riots, the Christian leader of Plateau State’s Inter-Religious Committee had urged political leaders and elders to ‘bury their differences’ and cooperate for the common good of all communities, specifically naming Governor Jonah Jang and former governor Joshua Dariye, among others (Obateru, 2002).

Trading in illegal arms is endemic all over Nigeria. Since the crisis, illegal weapons have also proliferated within Jos and all over Plateau State. In addition, a

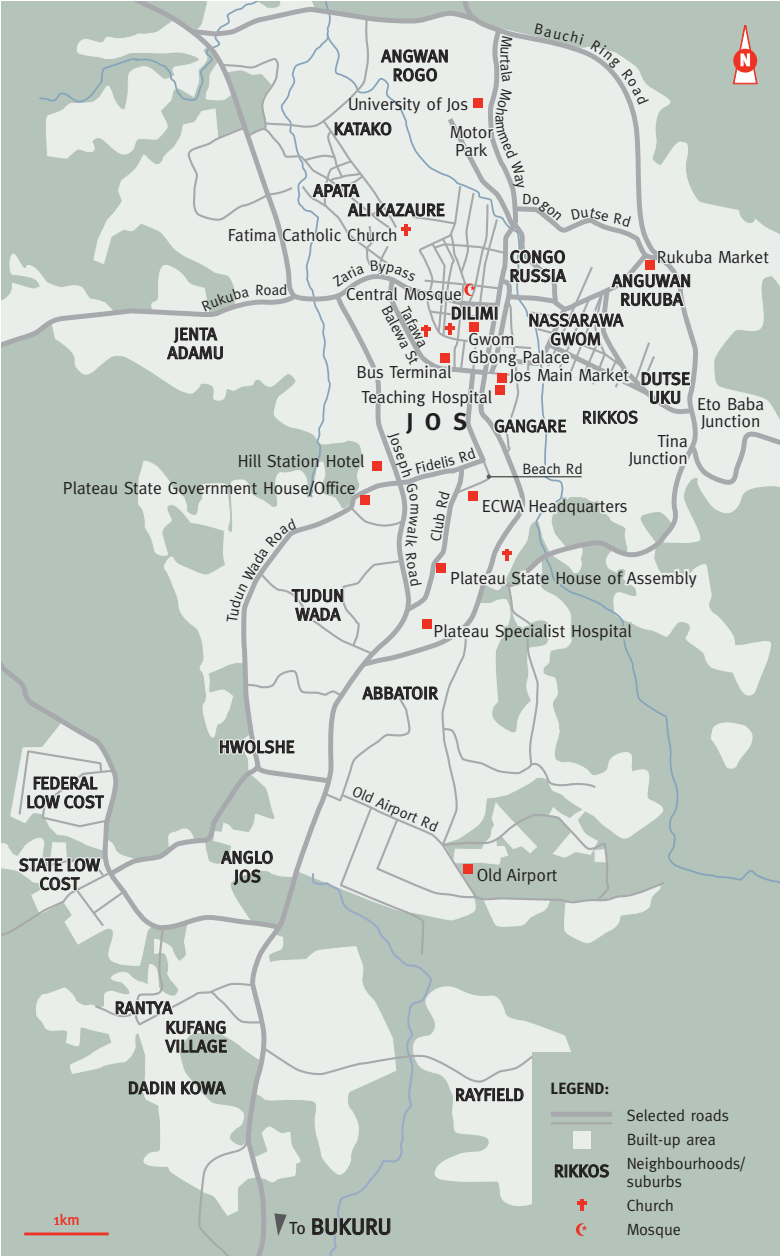
significant number of weapons are manufactured locally. Local communities blame each other for acquiring weapons and preparing for the next attack. Arms are financed and supplied by ethnic and religious militias, politicians, wealthy individuals, or traditional rulers as well as local communities via religious, cultural, and development organizations.⁶ The sharp rise in gun fatalities in the 2008 and 2010 Jos riots testifies to the alarming number of illegal arms in circulation.

In the run-up to the 2011 elections, residents in Jos warned that ‘2011 will be bloody hell’.⁷ This time, security forces were on high alert and successfully prevented a major outbreak. Helicopters flew over the city to monitor protests and allow for rapid responses. Tear gas was used to disperse protesters who could have turned into rioters. Plateau State emerged as the northernmost state in support of President Goodluck Jonathan, a southern Christian, in his race against Gen. Muhammadu Buhari, a northern former military ruler. The subsequent violence in the northern states, particularly in neighbouring Kaduna and Bauchi states, underlined the vulnerability of the region to religiously framed political violence.

This report examines the root causes of conflict in Jos and its transformation into a wider ethno-religious protracted conflict. It maps the spread of violence that reshaped the face of the city. The first part outlines the historical background and socio-economic characteristics to Plateau State. The second part analyses the root and proximate causes of the conflict and documents the local population’s perceptions of the current situation. The analysis then focuses on the violent episodes and investigates the characteristics of urban and rural violence. In its final section, the report provides an overview of violence prevention and peace-building efforts pursued by the government, civil society actors, and international donors over the past decade.

This report is based on field research carried out in Jos in November and December 2010 and July 2011. The author conducted more than 70 interviews with local residents, community and religious leaders, local NGO staff, journalists, university researchers, ward heads, and local politicians. Interviews with local residents were mostly held in the worst-affected poor neighbourhoods of Jos. Two focus group discussions were held on community violence prevention strategies. The author visited youth outreach peace activities, such as a high school peace club and a group discussion subsequent to an interfaith soccer match. Discussions were also held with several residents who were active in local community peace activities. In addition to a literature review, the report draws on newspaper reporting of violent incidents and peacemaking efforts over the past decade. All interview respondents are cited anonymously. 

MAP 1 Jos





I. Historical background and socio-economic characteristics

Spatial and demographic characteristics

Jos is located on a mountainous plateau that rises more than 1,000 metres over the surrounding plain. To the south and south-east, the plateau falls off into savannah lowlands. The region is of scenic beauty, with gigantic rock formations arising from the plains. Given its high altitude, Jos offers a temperate climate and has long attracted both foreign visitors and retired elites. Its surroundings are known for its hillsides, spectacular waterfalls, and wildlife parks. Until the regime change in 1999, it was also known for its relatively harmonious communal relations.

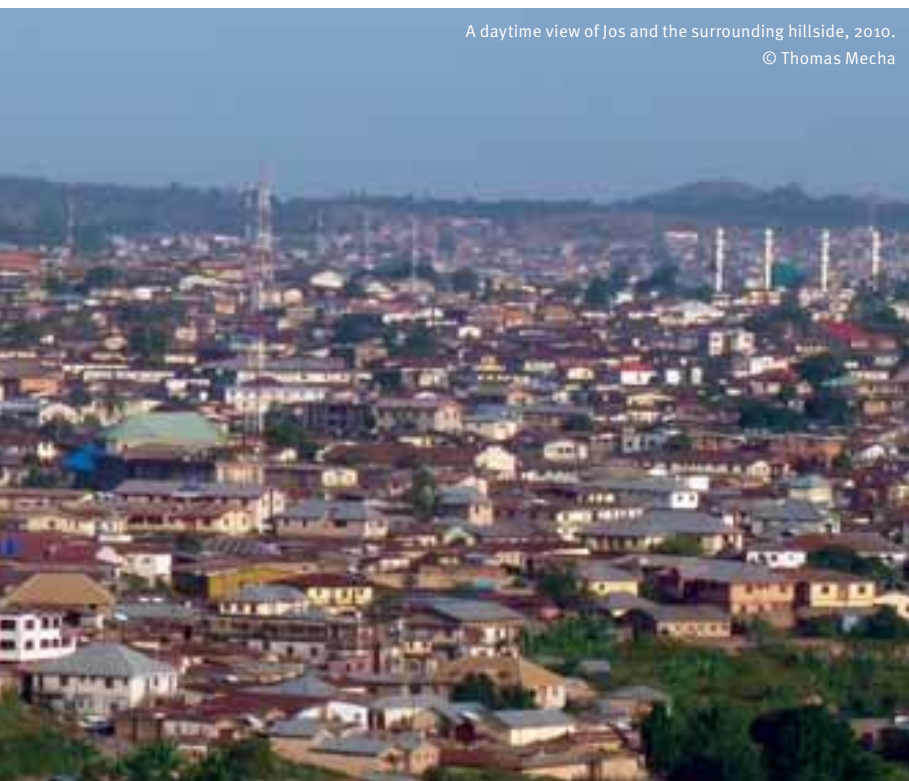


Jos lies in the centre of the country, at the juncture of the predominantly Muslim north and Christian south. Nigeria's population of approximately 155 million inhabitants is almost evenly split between Muslims (50 per cent) and Christians (40 per cent). The predominantly Muslim Hausa and Fulani together constitute roughly one-third of the country's population (CIA, n.d.). The Yoruba and the Igbo dominate the south of the country; while they are majority Christians, the Yoruba include a sizeable Muslim minority.⁸

In administrative terms, Plateau State is part of the North-Central Zone, one of six geopolitical zones. In addition to the Federal Capital Territory (Abuja), the North-Central Zone includes Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nassarawa, Niger, and Plateau states. These states were historically part of the Northern Region that emerged during colonial times, with its capital in Kaduna. The regional system was split into federal states in 1967. Many northerners still consider the Plateau and surrounding states to be part of the north. In contrast, the smaller, largely Christian ethnic groups refer to their region as the 'Middle Belt'. The concept of the Middle Belt emerged during the 1940s, when the United Middle Belt Congress was formed as a political party in opposition to the dominant

A daytime view of Jos and the surrounding hillside, 2010.

© Thomas Mecha



Northern People's Congress. The idea of a separate Middle Belt identity gained widespread support after Nigeria gained independence in 1960, in response to political domination by the northern states (IPCR, 2008, p. 53).

Plateau State is one of the most diverse federal states, with more than 58 ethnic groups (Best, 2007, p. 4). The region hosts a high concentration of relatively small ethnic communities with more than 40 languages (Blench, 2009, p. 2). The main ethnic groups in Jos are the Berom, the Anaguta, the Afizere, the Igbo, the Yoruba, and the Hausa–Fulani.⁹ The Berom, Anaguta, and Afizere are recognized as the main indigene groups in Jos and are predominantly Christian. Owing to their long residence in Jos, many Hausa–Fulani in the city refer to themselves as Jasawa ('people of Jos'). The name is meant to distinguish them from the Hausa–Fulani population in the states farther to the north.¹⁰ The term Jasawa is also used for political representation of the Hausa in Jos. The Fulani have mostly remained cattle herders and their grazing routes often take them beyond Plateau State. The majority of the population

MAP 2 Plateau State, Nigeria



in Plateau State is Christian, although accurate religious breakdowns are lacking (HRW, 2001, p. 5). Within the centre of metropolitan Jos, Muslim Hausa–Fulani constitute the majority.

The Nigerian Census of 2006 recorded a total population of 3,178,712 for Plateau State (Nigeria, 2006). Plateau State is made up of 17 Local Government Areas (LGAs) (see Map 2). Jos LGA was divided into Jos North LGA and Jos South LGA, with headquarters in Bukuru. The city of Jos has expanded beyond Jos North and has largely merged with Bukuru into one urban centre. The Census of 2006 estimated the population of Jos North LGA at 429,300 people. Jos South and Jos East were less populated, with 306,716 and 85,602 inhabitants, respectively (Nigeria, 2006). A more recent estimate puts the number at more than one million inhabitants for the Jos–Bukuru urban complex (Dung-Gwom and Rikko, 2009, p. 5).

Given the city's strategic position, Jos has long served as a communication centre between the north and south of the country. Decades ago, Jos also served as a major rail and highway hub. The city has long housed the headquarters of several Christian and Islamic organizations. It was an important location for Christian missionary activities for the entire north of Nigeria and even housed the West African headquarters of several missionary societies. As a relatively young city in close proximity to the northern urban centres, it lacks more established Muslim traditional orthodoxies and has attracted Muslim reform movements (Higazi, 2011, p. 6).¹¹

Historical background

Jos was officially founded in 1915. The Berom and other indigene groups argue that the city was founded on land that belonged to them as the native people of the Plateau. The Hausa–Fulani contest this claim and hold that the city was established on 'virgin land' that belonged to nobody (Best, 2007, p. 17). Jos was established with the commencement of tin mining. The indigene population on the Plateau consisted of mostly farmers with little interest in tin mining. Some indigene groups were hostile to the influx of Nigerian migrants and Europeans. During the 1940s, the Berom attempted to disrupt mining operations to prevent further destruction of farmland. The mining industry attracted migrant workers from all over Nigeria. By the mid-1940s, more than 200 mining camps had been built on the Plateau and the miner population exceeded 40,000 (Dung-Gwom and Rikko, 2009, p. 6). The Hausa constituted the most numerous ethnic group that worked in the mines. Significant numbers of Igbo, Yoruba, and members of smaller tribes also migrated to Jos during the same period. Those who had received a Western education in the south of Nigeria served within the colonial administration. Others worked as craftsmen or in

commerce. Owing to the mining activities, the city expanded rapidly and the population grew steadily between 1930 and 1960 (Plotnicov, 1967, p. 36).

British colonial rule initially relied on the political structures of the neighbouring Bauchi Emirate to administer Jos. The Bauchi Emirate was part of the Sokoto Caliphate which had been established in 1804 in contemporary northern Nigeria. It emerged during the Islamic reform movement of Usman dan Fodio (1754–1817). The Caliphate was one of the largest political entities in pre-colonial Africa and comprised about 30 emirates. Fourteen of the current 36 federal states had direct experience with the emirate system (Paden, 2005, p. 70). In contemporary Plateau State, the legacy of the dan Fodio movement remains palpable. Christians point out that the jihad expansion was stopped at the mountains surrounding the Jos Plateau. Most of the ethnic groups of the ‘Middle Belt’ thus remained animist and later turned to Christianity, during and after colonial rule. Only the lowlands of Plateau State came under the influence of the jihad movement and emirs came to reign in Wase and Dengi.¹²

The Hausa settled in self-governing communities in Jos and the surrounding rural area. From 1914 to 1952 they elected one of their members to the title of ‘Sarkin Jos’ (Chief of Jos) to represent their community. The title originally

MAP 3 Present-day Nigeria



Source: adapted from a map by Jasper Dung, University of Jos Department of Geography and Planning and the Oklahoma State University Department of Geography

referred to the 'native town'. Under British rule, the city of Jos was divided into the Government Reserved Areas for Europeans and other foreigners, the township for educated southern Nigerian clerks and other Europeans, and the native town mainly for Hausa migrant workers. Over the years, ten different Sarkin Jos came to manage the everyday affairs of the town. Administrative control remained beyond reach for the indigenous population until the early 1950s.

In 1947, the institution of the traditional paramount ruler of Jos, the Gbong Gwom Jos, was installed. Following the establishment of the Berom Tribal Council and Berom Native Authority, political power was gradually transferred to the Berom. The appointment of a Berom to the Gbong Gwom led to tensions with the Anaguta and Afizere, but also with the Hausa over the position of the Sarkin Jos. The Hausa claimed the privilege of traditional and political representation for their own community. This rendered the Jos Town Council ineffective during the 1950s. Elected members were proportional to tribal representation within each ward and fought over preserving their groups' privileges. The colonial administration noted in 1954 that the city 'with its polyglot population must always be considered a potential trouble spot' (Plotnicov, 1967, p. 42).¹³

Upon independence in 1960, Jos was the most cosmopolitan city in Nigeria. Owing to the large number of Europeans in Jos, there was a wide range of urban amenities, including good health care facilities, telephone service, and paved roads, improved housing and sanitary codes, and a wide range of schools and higher education facilities. During this period, Jos lay within the southern part of the Northern Region. The city had repeatedly voted in favour of the opposition party. In response, the ruling party of the Northern Region diverted commercial, industrial, and other developments away from Jos and neglected the infrastructure connecting the city with other Nigerian regions (Plotnicov, 1967, pp. 36–39).

With the expansion of the expatriate population in Jos and the creation of the capital city of Abuja, vegetable farming became very profitable. The Hausa–Fulani were the first to adopt dry-season farming. The Fulani movement into what is now Plateau State commenced in late 19th century and intensified with the ending of colonialism. Some Fulani cattle herders also bought land and began gardening during this period. The Hausa–Fulani's vast trade networks placed them at a relative economic advantage over the indigene population, which was slow to recognize these developments. Some adopted modernized farming practices only in the late 1990s (Blench, 2003b, pp. 2–4).

From the 1960s to the 1990s, the Nigerian federalist structure emerged. This led to several changes and adjustments of the boundaries of Plateau State. The country's three regions were split into 12 states in 1967. The number of

federal states has since increased to 36. Plateau State was carved out of the former Benue–Plateau State in 1976. The creation of neighbouring Nassarawa State in 1996 further reduced Plateau State in size.¹⁴

Social and economic characteristics

During the colonial and early post-colonial period Jos was dominated by migrants while the indigenes made up less than two per cent of the city population (Plotnicov, 1967, p. 61). The migrants also dominated the economic life in the city because Igbo, Yoruba, and Hausa were traditionally strong in trade and other commercial activities. Last has pointed to the significance of religious institutions in providing networks to an urban population with a large number of migrants (Last, 2007, p. 614). Churches and mosques as well as ethnic associations served as localities of social exchange and integration. In rural areas, a complex clan organization with traditional rulers is present to this day.¹⁵ Although Plateau State was long considered more peaceful than neighbouring regions, its history is not free from violent conflict. As Higazi notes, more people died in the 1966 pogroms against the Igbo and other easterners perpetrated by Hausa and Berom mobs than in the 2001 riots (Higazi, 2011, p. 15).

Tensions among the ethnic groups along the indigene–settler divide have long characterized inter-communal relations in Plateau State. The religious dimension adds another layer, linking local tensions to broader regional and national confrontations. It also reinforces the boundaries between the Berom, Anaguta, and Afizere and the Hausa–Fulani in their struggle over political representation in Jos North LGA. In line with Muslim traditions, the Hausa maintained a sense of closure¹⁶ and largely viewed Christians as ‘infidels’. This approach caused resentment among the indigene communities. Inter-marriage occurred mostly between Muslim men and indigene women who had converted to Islam; meanwhile, Muslim women were often forbidden to marry Christians, a practice that continues to this day (Danfulani, 2006, p. 4). Social tensions over inter-religious marriages increased with the onset of communal violence. In some areas, Christian pastors explicitly prohibited women from marrying Muslim men. Such positions encouraged patrols of young men to enforce the newly established religious boundaries and sparked occasional vigilante violence. Some pastors went so far as to declare that women caught with a Muslim man ‘must be forcibly brought back’ (Griswold, 2008). Despite these general social tensions, it should also be noted that many Christian, Muslim, and mixed families enjoyed good inter-communal relations over decades. The many testimonies of people hiding and protecting their neighbours of different faiths during violent attacks amply demonstrate this (HRW, 2001; 2011).

Nigeria as a whole has stagnated on its human development indicators. At this writing, it was ranked 142 out of 169 countries and stood slightly above the Sub-Saharan African average (UNDP, n.d.). The 'Middle Belt' region is generally a rather poor zone within Nigeria. Since the closing of the tin mines, Plateau State's economy has largely been based on rural agriculture. The little industry there is offers limited employment opportunities. Tin mining has badly affected parts of the Plateau: about one-third of the land around the mines suffers from significant soil erosion, with negative consequences for agricultural production (Pasquini and Alexander, 2005; Thapa and Yila, 2010).¹⁷ Large numbers of cattle have caused further degradation and erosion (Blench, 2003b, p. 2). Plateau state is often described as a 'civil service state' where people mainly seek government employment (Fwatshak, 2011, p. 5). The protracted communal conflict also worsened the economic situation by deterring tourists from visiting the Plateau's resorts and wild parks. 🇳🇮



II. Root and proximate causes of the violent conflict

Competing historical interpretations and political claims

Labels such as ‘settler’, ‘native’, ‘non-native’, ‘host community’, ‘foreigner’, ‘native foreigner’, ‘stranger element’, ‘squatter’, ‘non-squatter’, ‘immigrant’, ‘migrant’, ‘indigene’, ‘non-indigene’ [. . .] among many others are used daily in Nigeria to describe, stigmatise or stereotype the ‘other’ as a category who ‘does not belong’ (Danfulani, 2006, p. 1).

Both sides selectively point to historical records to justify their claim to the city of Jos, to indigene rights, and to political representation. Hausa–Fulani leaders argue that there was no Jos when they arrived on the Plateau. They claim to have founded Jos and nurtured it into a modern city. A recent publication circulating among the Hausa–Fulani cites the 1930 Jos Township census to demonstrate that back then the Hausa constituted by far the most numerous ethnic group in the township (Mohammed, 2007). Jasawa leaders also point out that parts of what is Plateau State today used to be under the Bauchi Emirate. The indigenes emphasize that the high plateau was never conquered by the dan Fodio jihad movement because plateau people actively resisted the jihad expansion. As noted above, the British policy of indirect rule initially relied on the structures of the Bauchi Emirate to administer Jos. In 1926 the British introduced a separate administration for the high plateau area around Jos (Best, 2007, p. 19). The contested history of Jos also finds expression in the trend among the indigenes to rename areas and streets to erase the Hausa legacy, although most people in Jos speak Hausa fluently.

The creation of Jos North LGA

The contemporary political conflict between the indigenes and the Hausa–Fulani dates back at least two decades. Under the military administration of Gen. Ibrahim Babangida, the Hausa–Fulani actively lobbied for the establishment of a local government in which they would be predominant. In 1991, their request was granted with the creation of Jos North LGA. The new boundaries made the Berom, Anaguta, and Afizere minorities within Jos North LGA.

The three groups vehemently protested the creation of Jos North, arguing that they had not been consulted and that they had not consented to it. They view the split of the old Jos LGA into Jos North and South LGAs as a deliberate strategy to give full political control over an LGA to the Hausa population (Best, 2007, pp. 51–53). Jos North LGA comprises the commercial centre of Jos as well as the main political and traditional offices, such as the palace of the indigene traditional leader, the Gbong Gwom of Jos.

Since the creation of Jos North LGA, elections and political appointments have been accompanied by strong tensions between the Hausa and the indigenes. A first minor crisis occurred in 1994 over the appointment of a Hausa candidate as chairman of the Jos North Local Government Council. The Berom and other indigene groups strongly protested the appointment. They maintained that the position should go to an indigene. Four people were killed during the protests and parts of several market areas as well as an Islamic school and mosque were destroyed (Best, 2007, pp. 54–55).

Citizenship and indigene rights

Nigeria's constitution grants every citizen the right to settle anywhere within the country and prohibits the government from discriminating against citizens based on ethnicity or religion. Nevertheless, strong regulations continue to favour the indigenes within states and even LGAs. Non-indigenes are excluded from university scholarships, pay higher school and university fees, and cannot be recruited into the civil service. The lack of political representation is thus perpetuated for non-indigene settlers. Local government authorities decide over the issuing of indigene certificates to their favoured ethnic and religious groups. The indigene status is therefore highly contested, especially since it is linked to important political, economic, and educational benefits. Long-term exclusion of one group's elite from political offices erodes existing patronage networks. The Jasawa population complains that since the early 1990s it has become almost impossible for them to receive indigene status, despite the fact that their community settled there generations ago.¹⁸

Proponents of indigene rights claim that any settler can return to his 'place of origin' and demand an indigene certificate there. In theory, therefore, no citizen would be discriminated against. In practice, however, many settlers have lived within their localities for several generations and cannot trace back their origins to a place where their ethnic group would constitute a majority. Although the Hausa–Fulani dominate the northern Muslim states, many Hausa–Fulani settlers in Plateau State have no ancestors in these states and cannot claim indigene rights there. Human Rights Watch refers to such settlers as

‘stateless citizens’ who are gravely disadvantaged and have no access to higher education or jobs in the civil service, the military, or the police forces (HRW, 2006, p. 38). Many Hausa–Fulani are now seeking to obtain certificates from Kano or Bauchi. But even if they can receive certificates there, indigene status in another state is of little use for employment within the Plateau State civil service.

However, many Christians of the Igbo and Yoruba communities are also ‘settlers’ in Jos North LGA. Their ancestors moved there during the same time period as the Hausa–Fulani. These settler groups do not claim indigene rights and have never been dominant in the politics of the city. In contrast, the Jasawa elite held political offices under the British and under the former military administration. Ostien concludes that ‘the city’s settler problem is a Jasawa problem’ (Ostien, 2009, p. 11). A Muslim elder in Jos stated that if a solution could be found to the conflict over indigene rights, 95 per cent of the potential for violent conflict in Plateau State would be removed.¹⁹

Berom elders have reiterated time and again that they are not willing to compromise over the Hausa–Fulani settler status. In 2001, Berom elders stated that ‘not only is Jos on Berom land, but Jos is our JERUSALEM and is indigenously inhabited by the Berom, Anaguta, and Afizere’ (Best, 2007, p. 35). A few years later, the traditional Berom leader stated that even if the Hausa had been in Plateau State for more than 1,000 years, they would remain non-indigene (HRW, 2006, p. 42). Indigene politicians add that the problem is one of assimila-

Box 1 Nigeria’s citizenship crisis

In principle, all Nigerian citizens are equal no matter the circumstances of their birth and whether or not they reside in their places of origin. But in practice, one is a Nigerian citizen only in his state of origin [...], no matter for how long one resides or domiciles in a state other than his own (Ojukwu and Onifade, 2010, p. 176).

The conflict over citizenship and indigene rights is in no way peculiar to Plateau State. Most states of the Nigerian federation face an indigene or citizenship crisis. The constitution privileges local descent over residency. Those who leave their state of origin risk becoming ‘second-class citizens’ in another part of the federation. Within a country of more than 250 ethnic groups, the discrimination against non-indigenes in all six geo-political zones threatens to tear the country apart. Indigene status is an important tool in the politics of identity and labelling. Differing interpretations of local history are applied to mark the boundaries of who belongs and who is left out.

Source: Golwa and Ojiji (2008)²⁰

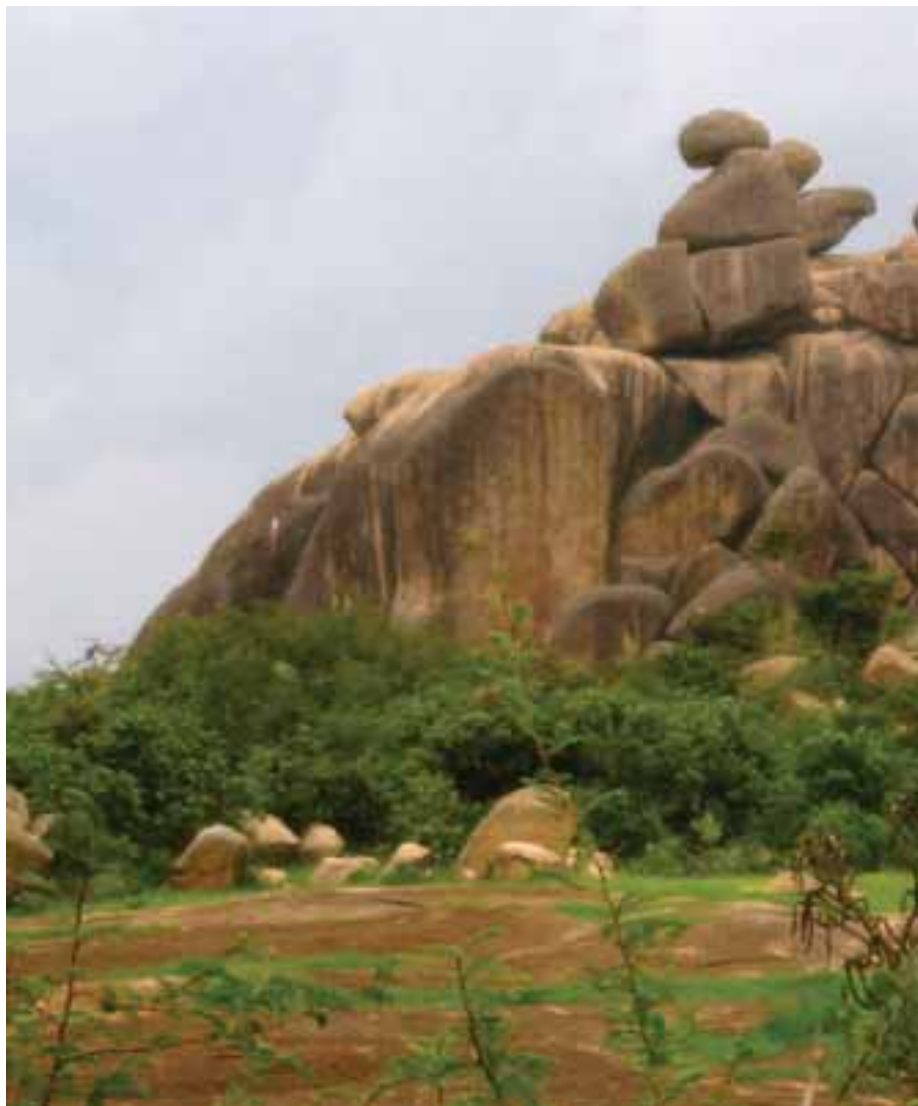
tion: as long as the Hausa do not identify themselves as Berom, they identify themselves as settlers (HRW, 2006, pp. 42–43), thus effectively demanding submission to Berom political control.

However, several respondents also stated that if it were not for the Hausa–Fulani as a common enemy, the Berom, Anaguta, and Afizere would be fighting among themselves over the ownership of Jos and privileges. Indeed, recent tensions between the Berom and the Afizere underline how easily notions of indigeneity are manipulated. The Afizere had sided with the Jasawa in the lead-up to the 2008 local elections against People’s Democratic Party (PDP) candidate Jonah Jang. After Jang assumed office, Afizeres complained that he intended to ‘chase them out to Bauchi’ and sent a letter of official complaint to the Prince Bola Ajibola Judicial Commission of Inquiry into the Jos unrest of 28 November 2008 (Ostien, 2009, p. 24). Urban discourse over claims to indigene rights and political control has since reverberated within smaller towns of Plateau State such as Namu, Yelwa, and Wase.

Rural land conflicts

Land conflicts existed in Jos long before the September 2001 crisis. Sporadic violent confrontations over farming and grazing land were already reported during colonial times. Before the 2001 crisis, conflicts between farmers and herders in Plateau State had not reached levels as high as in some neighbouring states. Indeed, local community leaders settled most tensions without having recourse to violent means. Yet with the expansion of agricultural production over the past decades, land for farming and grazing became contested. The increase of farming reduced the cattle herders’ access to water for their livestock and changed the interaction between farmers and herders (Blench, 2003b, pp. 4–10).²¹

The pastoral Fulani have been accused of allowing their cattle to graze on the land of the indigene population. These claims gave rise to rustling of the valuable cattle and attacks on Fulani communities. Large numbers of cattle were stolen from the Fulani, who responded with counter-attacks on mostly Christian villages (HRW, 2005, p. 9). After the first riot in Jos in 2001, many Christians brought corpses back to their home village for burial. This practice further aggravated tensions. Some village communities turned their anger against the Muslim Fulani, who responded with reprisal attacks.²² The Fulani claim to have lost at least 1,800 tribe members and more than 160,000 cows between September 2001 and May 2004 (HRW, 2005, p. 9). The violent conflict is ongoing.



The regional dimension of the Jos crisis

The indigene–settler issue is endemic in the ‘Middle Belt’ states surrounding the Plateau. The North-Central is a ‘hyperactive conflict zone’ plagued with rural conflicts over land and grazing rights and over political representation (IPCR, 2008, p. 54). Several states, such as Benue and Plateau, are reported to host large numbers of ex-soldiers with access to weapons. These individuals are also available to form and train militias based on existing vigilante groups.

The Shere Hills landscape near Jos.

© Jana Krause



The proliferation of arms in the North-Central Zone has been recognized as an alarming trend for several years (IPCR, 2003, p. 129). The presence of militias and thugs for hire in neighbouring states is worrisome for Plateau State.

In addition, Kaduna and Bauchi states are also infected by violent confrontations between Muslims and Christians. In 2000, Kaduna city suffered massive communal violence between Muslims and Christians over the introduction of sharia criminal law, with at least 2,000 people having been killed.²³ Smaller

riots took place again in 2002, this time over the 'Miss World' contest that was set to take place in Nigeria. As a result, the city today is largely segregated into a Christian southern and a Muslim northern part. Kaduna city has remained peaceful since 2002, but the April 2011 post-election riots demonstrated the fragility of this separated arrangement.

Bauchi State was also badly hit by Muslim protests in April 2011. Bauchi has repeatedly been rocked by clashes with religious dimensions in rural communities. For instance, in May 2011, a Christian-dominated village was attacked and 16 people were killed (BBC, 2011b). The Muslim community in Jos is frequently accused of receiving mercenaries from Bauchi and other states farther north, as well as from Chad and Niger. These accounts are very widespread. Given the small number of arrests made subsequent to violent clashes in Plateau State, it is difficult to assess their validity.

Many Christians in Jos point to the discrimination against fellow Christians in Muslim-dominated northern states and therefore see no wrong in political exclusion of the Jasawa community in Jos. For instance, the ancient city of Kano hosts a significant Christian population that is denied indigene rights. Non-Hausa there have never been granted a local government area but 'were divided and placed at Hausa dominated areas just to ensure that non-indigenes never dominated any political space in Kano' (Ojukwu and Onifade, 2010, p. 178). Christians in Kano have been subjected to many forms of discrimination and to reprisal attacks following violence in Plateau State. Other indigene representatives in Jos demand a national solution to the problem. They argue that they will not be the first to compromise on privileges widely enjoyed by other ethnic communities throughout the federation. However, they know that a national solution would require an amendment to the Nigerian constitution, which is not on the agenda at the moment.

The emergence of militant fundamentalists in the northern states is yet another significant regional development. The 2010 Christmas bombings in Jos occurred alongside attacks by extremist Islamists on churches in the northern town of Maiduguri in Borno State. Borno has been plagued by the re-emergence of the Boko Haram²⁴ sect despite a major security crackdown in July 2009, when hundreds of people were killed during clashes between the sect and security forces. Christian places of worship have since been targeted. On Christmas Eve 2010 some 30 alleged Islamists killed a pastor and several other Christians at a church in Maiduguri. In 2011 Boko Haram remained in the news headlines with several bomb attacks, including the bombing of the headquarters of the United Nations in Abuja, and assassinations of politicians in Maiduguri.

The religious dimension

Several factors have contributed to the religious dimensions of the confrontation in Jos. Generally, religion has become entrenched in Nigerian politics since the mid-1970s, with both politicians and religious leaders urging their followers to vote along religious lines (Falola, 1998, pp. 2–3). National regime change in 1999 lent the religious factor a new fervour. The birth of the fourth republic was followed by violent conflicts between Muslims and Christians in northern states, which further eroded trust between the religious communities in Jos. Specifically, the introduction of the sharia criminal code in 12 northern states in 2000 and 2001 provoked major protest from Christians. Many objected to what they perceived as a progressive Islamization of public life and discrimination against Christian minorities in northern cities. Disputes over sharia resulted in deadly inter-religious violence in the cities of Kano and Kaduna. This development led a substantive number of Christians to move out from the northern states, such as Kano and Bauchi, into Plateau State.²⁵ They brought with them stories of discrimination and atrocities, exacerbating tensions between religious communities in Jos.

Among Christians, perceptions of the Jos conflict have become interlinked with regional and national politics. They fear that if Muslims win control over Jos North LGA, they will soon control Plateau State as a whole. This scenario is portrayed as a first step towards winning political control over Nigeria and expanding Islamic influence on the African continent. Several Christian respondents stated: ‘If the Muslims have Jos, they have Nigeria. And if they have Nigeria, they have Africa.’²⁶ Other Christian respondents refused to give credence to generalizations that portray the local conflict over political participation in Jos North LGA as a religious confrontation of international dimensions. Still, many Christians—among them high-level religious leaders, academics, and journalists—invoke the terms ‘jihad’ and ‘terrorists’ to explain the current situation.²⁷ Several Christian representatives and NGOs understand the struggle over Jos North LGA as a direct extension of the 19th-century dan Fodio jihad, which came to a halt on the mountains of Plateau, taking the causes of the contemporary political crisis in Jos into lesser account.²⁸

In response to the 2008 crisis, many Christian leaders linked the Jos conflict to a broader religious confrontation. They pointed to the destruction of religious rather than political institutions after election disputes. For example, the former chairman of the Plateau State Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Archbishop Ignatius Kaigama, known for his very active role in inter-faith peace-building, stated subsequent to the 2008 riot:


We were taken aback by the turn of events in Jos. We thought it was political, but from all indications it is not so. We were surprised at the way some of our churches and property were attacked and some of our faithful and Clergy killed. The attacks were carefully planned and executed. The questions that bog our minds are why were churches and Clergy attacked and killed? Why were politicians and political party offices not attacked if it were a political conflict? Why were the business premises and property of innocent civilians destroyed? We strongly feel that it was not political, but pre-meditated act[s] under the guise of elections (*This Day*, 2008).

The Muslim leadership in Jos vehemently protested the religious framing of the 2008 crisis. In the name of the Jos North Muslim Ummah, they stated:

The November 2008 violence in Jos was ethno-political in all ramifications; its antecedents, the circumstances, the principal actors and the reason so far adduced by all parties only point to one inevitable conclusion; the struggle by ethnic groups to capture political power and manipulate for selfish reasons or to keep as vehicle for attaining socio-political goals. [. . .] We cannot deny the fact that Mosques and Churches were destroyed in the mayhem, so also Schools, Residential houses, markets and other places that serve the common needs of all, regardless of faith, were destroyed (Jos North Muslim Ummah, 2009a).

During the 2011 campaigns for gubernatorial elections, the religious and regional framing of the Jos conflict surfaced once more. Former Vice-Governor Pauline Tallen had secured Jasawa support in her race against Governor Jonah Jang. Yet days before the vote, text messages were sent around in Jos claiming that she was an instrument within the collective Hausa aspirations to rule Nigeria:

‘To all Muslims: we must reclaim Kaduna, install a Muslim governor in Taraba, plant a deputy governor in Benue, install a woman as governor (which is Haram but she’s a necessary weapon of change) in Plateau. We must capture Central Nigeria. Council of Ulama, Northern Nigeria’ (Owuamanam, 2011).

The Council of Ulama has not confirmed responsibility for the text message. Its origin remains unclear, but deliberate fabrication is very likely. The voting pattern confirmed that Tallen’s cooperation with the Jasawa in Jos damaged her chances among Christian and indigene voters. Governor Jang won the election by a clear margin. 



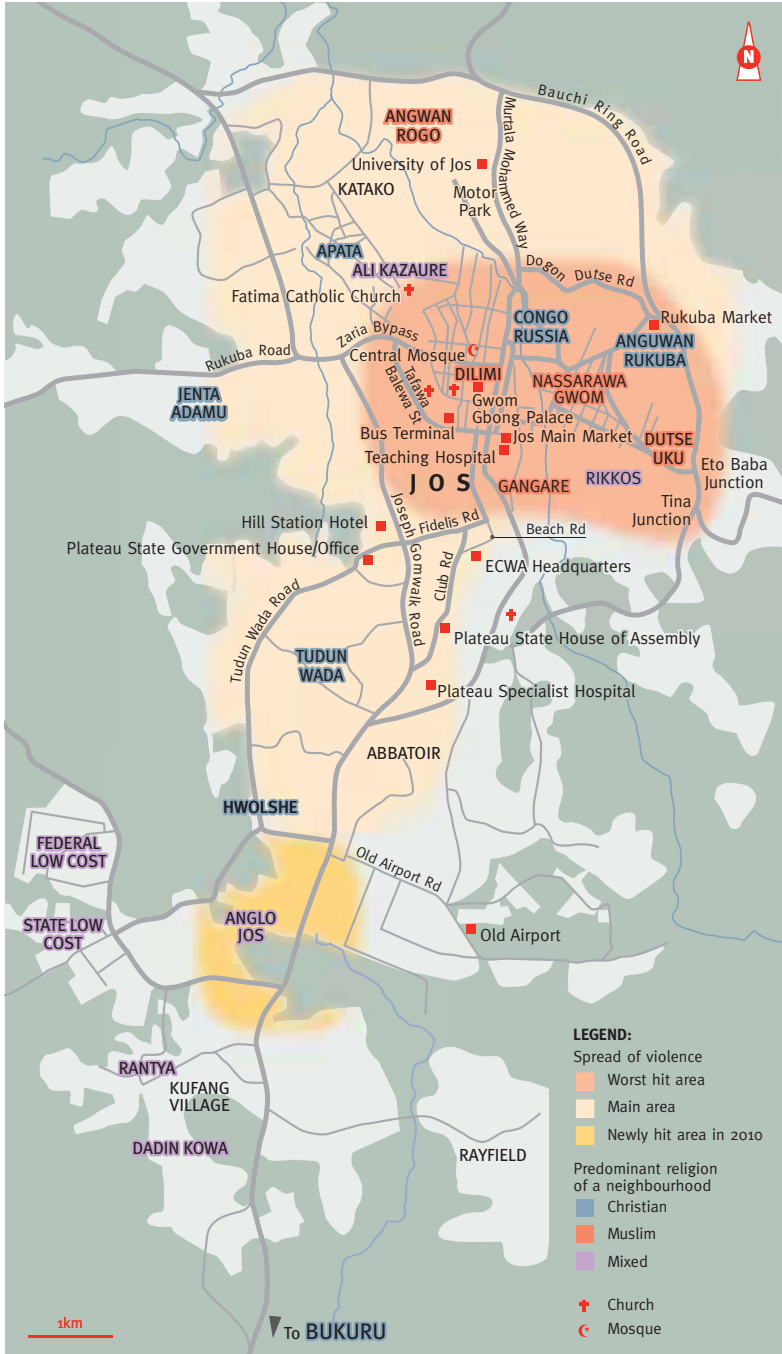
III. Violent events in Jos and rural Plateau State

The urban epicentre of violence lies in the densely populated poor neighbourhoods of Jos North LGA (see Map 4). These include the city's commercial centre around the terminus area, the markets around the burnt-out market building, and the market streets of Dilimi. The areas most affected by violence are the large central neighbourhoods Nassarawa Gwom (including Dutse Uku), Congo-Russia, Ali Kazaure, and Rikkos. The settlement around the University of Jos, Angwan Rogo, has become exclusively Muslim since the 2001 riots and has therefore remained peaceful. On the other side, Apata became exclusively Christian—mainly Igbo—after 2001. Congo-Russia, a Christian neighbourhood, was mostly razed to the ground during the 2008 riots; the extreme destruction remains visible today. Ali Kazaure and Nassarawa Gwom used to be mixed but have become predominantly Muslim since the recent violence in 2008 and 2010. The remaining Christians mostly live in segregated parts of these neighbourhoods.

The poor central areas are densely populated, with pathways behind the main streets often so narrow that a motorbike can barely get through. Once fighting breaks out, the slum areas are difficult to police. Many among the police and military are unwilling to enter too deeply into the poorest areas for fear of being outnumbered by Christian or Muslim armed mobs.²⁹

Bukuru, the urban centre of Jos South LGA, has also been a flashpoint over the past decade. It was particularly badly hit in January 2010. A number of mixed settlements between Jos and Bukuru experienced violence during the latter years of the crisis. Parts of the large neighbourhood of Tudun Wada escaped the 2001 crisis but saw massive fighting in 2008 and 2010, with large numbers of Muslims killed. Mixed Anglo Jos managed to remain peaceful until January 2010. Elders and religious leaders had agreed to preserve peace and mixed youth groups were meant to patrol the street. However, youth groups from the neighbouring Christian village of Kufang attacked and looted Anglo Jos in January 2010. Most of the Muslim population managed to flee via the main road to the army barracks at Old Airport Road.

Sparsely populated former Government Reserved Areas are located between Jos North and Bukuru. These middle-class settlements include State and

MAP 4 Jos: the spread of violence and religious segregation

Federal Low Cost, Rantya, and Rayfield, where no large-scale fighting took place. Security forces were present, private security is available to many middle-class houses, and community leaders agreed to avoid violence. Killings of Muslim families took place in Mai Adiko, a poor area on the outskirts of Rayfield.³⁰ The only religiously and also socio-economically mixed neighbourhood between Jos North LGA and Bukuru that has remained entirely peaceful to date is Dadin Kowa (see Box 4 and Map 4).

Many indigenes accuse the Hausa–Fulani population of aiming to displace the non-Hausa permanently from central areas in Jos North, including Angwan Rimi, Angwan Rogo, Bauchi Road, Congo-Russia, Dogon Dutse, Gangare, Nassarawa, and Rikkos. This strategic displacement would ensure that Jasawa candidates would win future elections of the highly contested Jos North LGA by a wide margin. The Jasawa, in turn, claim that indigene politicians want to drive them out entirely from Plateau State. Many Hausa–Fulani no longer feel safe in the outer areas of the city and thus move into the already congested city centre, or leave the state entirely.

The 2001 crisis

I heard an announcement on the mosque loudspeaker, saying: ‘Finish these people off if you catch any of them’ (a Jos resident, quoted in HRW, 2001, p. 14).

Not unlike the 1994 troubles, the 2001 crisis began as a conflict over the appointment of a Jasawa to public office. This time, however, the new National Poverty Eradication Coordinator was appointed by the federal government under the presidency of Olusegun Obasanjo. Nevertheless, the indigenes strongly protested the appointment. Human Rights Watch reported that the Berom youths and the Jasawa youth association had sent clearly threatening memos and written exchanges to the governor of Plateau State before the violence erupted (HRW, 2001, p. 6). Despite clear indicators and warnings from several NGOs, the government did not undertake any significant preventive measures.

Fighting broke out in Congo-Russia, a central poor area surrounded by Muslim-dominated neighbourhoods. A main street had been blocked during Friday prayers. A brawl broke out when a Christian woman tried to pass through the congregation. Tensions over the blocking of the street during Friday prayers had existed for several years (Best, 2007, pp. 66–67). The mosque at the entrance to the predominantly Christian Congo-Russia neighbourhood was therefore a place where provocations would easily turn into violent fighting. According to testimonies collected by Human Rights Watch shortly after the

riot, Christian and Muslim youths faced each other with homemade weapons. These included arrows, sticks, machetes, and guns. Fighting took place along improvised front lines (HRW, 2001, p. 9).

A strong religious dimension underlined the violent clashes from the first day: ‘Church bells were ringing and there were Muslim calls to prayer throughout the night’ (HRW, 2001, p. 10). Christians were attacked around the university area, next to Angwan Rogo. Since then the entire settlement has become exclusively Muslim. Muslims were attacked and driven out of Apata and the mixed neighbourhood of Ali Kazaure became a battleground between both groups. Many testimonies point to the selected targeting of individuals as neighbours took the opportunity to settle private scores during the crisis (HRW, 2001, pp. 10–16). In terms of target selection, religious identity has been decisive over ethnic identity. Yet both Muslim indigenes and Christian Hausa–Fulani have been threatened and are not entirely safe within their communities.³¹ The 2001 crisis resulted in religious segregation within the city centre of Jos, with the strongholds identified as the ‘sharia line’ and the ‘new Jerusalem’ (Danfulani and Fwatshak, 2002, p. 253).

The 2002–04 killings and the state of emergency

After the 2001 riots, violence spilled over into rural areas. Numerous clashes erupted between herders and farmers. The southern lowlands of Plateau State bore the brunt of violence. Worst hit were Shendam, Wase, and Langtang North and South LGAs. Other areas such as Kanam, Kanke, Mikang, and Pankshin LGAs experienced fewer clashes. Rural fighting killed between 1,000 and 2,000 people between the years 2002 and 2004 (Krause, 2011). Given the poor accessibility of rural villages, exact numbers are impossible to obtain.³²

Violent clashes broke out subsequent to a political crisis in the town of Yelwa in Shendam. The creation of new districts resulted in open conflict over district boundaries and political control. The presence of local vigilante groups facilitated mobilization along ethnic and religious lines. By 2004, more than 100 villages had been attacked, damaged, or destroyed by well-armed militia groups. The state security forces appear to have been largely absent during the escalation of violence in the lowlands. For example, for almost two years militia groups managed to block the road between Wase and Langtang, isolating Wase. According to Higazi, ‘the main protagonists were generally small, highly mobile, well-armed groups with excellent local knowledge and familiarity with the bush’ (Higazi, 2008, pp. 3–4). The main types of weapon used included AK-47s, machine guns and sub-machine guns, G3 rifles, Mark 4 rifles, single- and double-barrel shotguns, pistols, obsolete firearms (‘Dane guns’), and locally made guns.³³

MAP 5 Plateau State: the spread of violence



The killings culminated in massive attacks by Christian militia groups in Yelwa. Having conducted an investigation, Human Rights Watch found that on 24 February 2004, armed Muslims killed at least 75 Christians in the small town of Yelwa. Many of them were killed within a church compound. The attackers arrived in pick-up trucks, shouting religious slogans, and killed their victims with machetes and firearms. The retaliation from Christian groups two months later was fierce: well-armed groups killed about 700 Muslims in Yelwa. The attack was thoroughly planned and coordinated and did not involve only Christians from the immediate neighbourhood. Reprisal killings claimed at least 200 Christian lives in Kano (HRW, 2005). A Muslim journalist commented that, unlike previous outbreaks of violence in Kano, when violence might have been more economically than religiously motivated, this time ‘they were just out to kill [...] looting was incidental’ (HRW, 2005, p. 60).

After the Yelwa killings, President Obasanjo declared a six-month state of emergency for Plateau State. Governor Joshua Dariye was suspended and Maj. Gen. Chris Alli was put in place as administrator. His administration made serious efforts to retrieve illegal firearms from rural communities in exchange for cash (AFP, 2004b). The amnesty programme offered large sums of money for arms over a period of three months. When the cash carrot yielded few results, house-to-house searches were undertaken in villages and small towns (Xinhua, 2004). It remains unclear how many weapons were retrieved.

The level of violence in Plateau State receded after the Yelwa crisis, but the area remained tense. In 2005 and 2006 violent clashes erupted in the town of Namu in Shendam (close to Yelwa), killing at least 100 people (*This Day*, 2006a). In September 2004, the Plateau State government estimated the total number of internally displaced persons within the state at about 220,000. Several thousand refugees remained in camps in neighbouring Bauchi and Nassarawa states for fear of returning to their towns and villages. Many Muslims displaced from Yelwa permanently resettled in Bauchi (IRIN, 2005).

The state of emergency left the political conflict in Jos completely unaddressed. The confrontation between the indigenes and the Jasawa continued over the following years. Time and again, Jos residents feared an imminent outbreak of another round of violent clashes.³⁴

The 2008 crisis

The chairman of Jos North, who was elected in 1999, left office in 2002. No local government elections took place until November 2008. The state government suspended elections in the riot-hit area due to security concerns despite protests by the Jasawa community (Mohammed, 2007, p. 18). The Jasawa elite had been in negotiations about broader political inclusion and offices for their community with Governor Jonah Jang over several years. Jang refused to cooperate with the Jasawa and planned to campaign without Muslim support. Ostien sums up the situation when he states that when the Plateau State local government elections took place, 'the stage was set [. . .] as a showdown between Jang and the Jasawa' in Jos North LGA (Ostien, 2009, p. 28).

While the indigenes secured the support of churches for their political campaign on the PDP ticket, the Jasawa allied with the Afizere on the All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP) platform. Ostien reports that ANPP supporters were convinced that Jang and the PDP could never win Jos North LGA (Ostien, 2009, p. 30). Both churches and mosques strongly called on their congregations to vote only for a Christian or a Muslim candidate, respectively:

The pastors were preaching in the churches that everyone should go out to vote, that they must not vote for any Muslim, the Muslims are infidels and we must not have them ruling over us. They want to Islamise the place. Don't vote for any unbeliever (Ostien, 2009, p. 30).

Both sides were prepared to make use of all forms of rigging practices to win Jos North LGA. The losing party would simply have been 'outrigged' (Ostien, 2009, p. 7). Although the election process itself went smoothly and peacefully, both parties had youth groups following the stages of vote collection and the transportation of ballot boxes to the collation centres to 'guard' their votes. However, the Jos North LGA collation centre had been relocated and neither side had been properly informed about it. This fuelled suspicions among the Jasawa that their votes would be lost. Tensions rose when both youth groups waited at the new collation centre for the announcement of the results. Eventually, they were forcibly dispersed by the police. Before long, youth gangs went on the rampage through the city, killing, burning, and looting in the central neighbourhoods (Ostien, 2009, pp. 31–32).

According to local counts of victims, at least 700 and possibly more than 850 people were killed. The Muslim community alone reported '632 lives lost, over 5000 injured, [...] 20 Islamic schools destroyed, 22 mosques burnt and 891 residential buildings destroyed' (Jos North Muslim Ummah, 2009b). The Catholic community reported 23 people killed and at least 600 houses and shops burnt or destroyed (JDPC, 2010). Christian communities submitted victim numbers and memoranda to the Plateau State Judicial Commission of Inquiry ('Ajibola Commission'), which was established following the crisis. The Stefanos Foundation reported 103 Christians dead in Congo-Russia, Nassarawa, Rikkos, the Sarki Mangu area, and Tudun Wada, and 330 houses burnt in Jos North (Stefanos Foundation, 2010a; 2010b; PSJCI, 2010, pp. 259–63). In addition, the Commission report states that 118 Christian Igbo and 31 Yoruba were killed (PSJCI, 2010, pp. 266–70). At least 118 people died in extra-judicial killings perpetrated by security forces, who gunned down unarmed citizens in their homes, chased and killed men trying to flee to safety, and lined up victims on the ground and summarily executed them (HRW, 2009, p. 9). According to CAN, at least 10,000 people were displaced (Dung-Gwom and Rikko, 2009, p. 7).³⁵ The detailed memorandum by the Jos North Muslim Ummah lists how each victim was killed. As Higazi notes, the number of gunshot fatalities is striking and suggests that guns were much more widely used than in the previous 2001 riot (Higazi, 2011, p. 23). Almost 90 per cent of Muslim victims died of gunshots (Jos North Muslim Ummah, 2009b).

Since the 2008 violence the Jasawa have had no contact or communication with the Jang government. Their leaders complain about the governor's

‘extremist mindset’ as both a Berom and Christian, accusing him of leading a government exclusively for the indigene population of Jos.³⁶ Many Hausa–Fulani suspect him to have actively promoted violence against them. Among the Christians, many praise the governor for standing up against their ‘enemies’, whom they fear would otherwise ‘finish them’.³⁷ The Jasawa leadership has not engaged in any kind of dialogue forum since the election-related riot.

The 2010 crisis

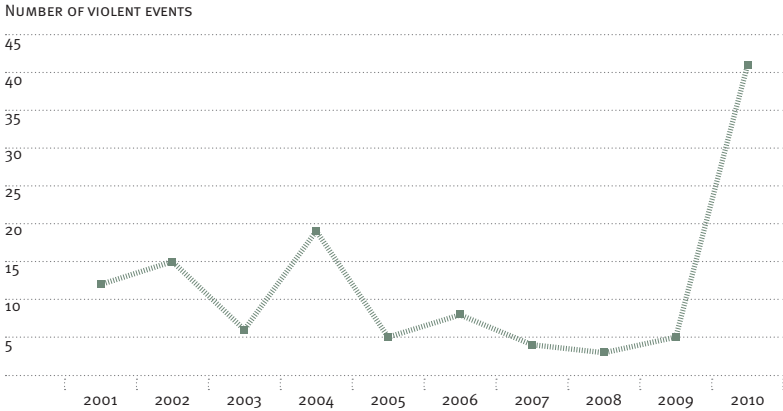
The 2010 crisis erupted on the morning of 17 January, a Sunday. The context of the outbreak of violence remains disputed. Muslims claim that a Muslim was attacked while reconstructing his house, which had been burnt down during the 2008 crisis in Dutse Uku, within the city centre. Christians argue that the reconstruction project was just a pretext to stir up trouble in the area. They maintain that the owner of the house brought hundreds of armed



men to work on his construction site, insulting Christian passers-by and attacking them (CMG, 2010). The Muslim owner of the house contends that Christians tried to prevent him from finishing the roof of the house and threatened to burn down his house again. According to Higazi's interview with the Muslim house owner, 'Christians mobilised, blowing a whistle and asking people to "come out and fight for Jesus"' (Higazi, 2011, p. 24). Attempts to solve the dispute through the ward head or to call in soldiers to prevent an escalation failed. The situation led to a brawl. Shortly afterwards, a nearby church was apparently attacked and destroyed. Again, the crisis spilled out beyond the city centre. Neighbourhoods that had remained peaceful until 2008, such as Anglo Jos, became sites of violent battles, looting, and destruction. Bukuru to the south of Jos city was also heavily affected by violence and destruction.³⁸ The fighting was quelled by a heavy military deployment in Jos and Bukuru. Yet many people said it was only a matter of time until the next violent outbreak. As a Hausa man in Bukuru noted: 'Most of our people are sharpening their knives for the next crisis' (IRIN, 2010b).



The destroyed market place in the mixed neighbourhood of Anglo Jos. © Jana Krause

FIGURE 2 Rise of violent clashes in Jos and environs**NOTES:**

The figure illustrates the current trend of numerous small-scale clashes, reprisals, and revenge attacks that occurred mostly in Jos North and Jos South LGAs (Jos and its outskirts) during 2010, based on newspaper reporting collected by the Armed Conflict Location and Events Dataset and research on LexisNexis by the author. Violent incidents that have not been reported in Nigerian newspapers have not been considered. This may imply an under-reporting of rural violent incidents, particularly for the years 2007–09. Only clashes related to the ethno-religious rift and political conflict are recorded; incidents of interpersonal violence that appear to be purely private or criminal in nature have been left out.

SOURCE:

Krause (2011)

At least 400 people are estimated to have died in January 2010 and more than 18,000 were displaced (IRIN, 2010a). The Muslim community in Jos reports much higher numbers, however. According to a memorandum that lists the names and places of victims, a total of 968 Muslims were killed in 2010 (Plateau State Muslim Ummah, 2010). These numbers include 206 in Jos North LGA, 578 in Jos South LGA, 144 in Barkin Ladi LGA, and victims in Bassa, Mangu, and Riyom LGAs. Many bodies were allegedly dumped in wells, buried in mass graves, or hidden. It thus remains difficult to assess the accuracy of these numbers. No equally detailed numbers exist on the Christian side.

During the following days and weeks, massacres took place on the outskirts of the city. On 19 January 2010, at least 150 Muslims were killed in Kuru Karama (HRW, 2010b). In a reprisal attack, at least 200 Christians died in Dogo Nahauwa on 7 March 2010 (HRW, 2010c). In both places all women, children, and the elderly who did not manage to hide or escape were killed. The trauma of both massacres weighed heavily on the population of Jos. Both sides often refer to Kuru Karama or Dogo Nahauwa to point out the extreme cruelty of the killers. Graphic photographs of corpses circulated within the city. Since then,

the situation in Plateau State has spiralled almost out of control. The number of small violent events reported in newspapers rose steeply (see Figure 2).

The presence of neighbourhood vigilante groups before the 2001 riots provided a youth network for local defence. These youths have clearly been involved in attacks and counter-attacks. Distinguishing between victims and perpetrators among these youths is not straightforward. On the outskirts of Jos and in rural areas, attacks by well-organized militia groups formed by both indigenes and predominantly Fulani on the Muslim side are well documented.³⁹ Within the city centre, the heavy presence of security forces inhibits such movement of militia groups. Many residents in the central poor neighbourhoods fear the presence of youths and gang leaders. Once violence breaks out, local youths are often drawn into the fighting as joiners who expect opportunities for looting, but also as defenders of their neighbourhood. One of the most destructive practices in urban violence is the mounting of roadblocks on major streets, such as Bauchi Road (site of attacks by Muslims) and Bauchi Ring Road (site of attacks by Christians). There is no escape when youth mobs ‘interrogate’ and beat up their victims to determine religious identity. Those trapped in the wrong neighbourhood risk being cut down by machetes and burned.

‘Silent killings’ of people discovered in the ‘wrong’ neighbourhood are an alarming new development. Both sides report men going missing since early 2010 and bodies are seldom recovered for burial. Recent newspaper reports

Box 2 Women victims and perpetrators

According to a thesis written at the University of Jos, sexual violence against women occurred on both sides during the crises (Higazi, 2007, p. 18). Many women also suffered the loss of husbands and older sons, which left them to take care of their children alone. The situation is further aggravated as many small businesses that used to be run by women in Jos and Bukuru have been destroyed during the repeated violent clashes.

Both sides also report that many women participated in the killings in Jos. Among the Berom, female rioters participated as early as 2001 (Higazi, 2007, p. 18). Muslim respondents claim that female participation is a new yet significant phenomenon that is treated as a ‘hush-hush thing’. One female resident of Nassarawa Gwom recounted: ‘The women were helping the men with the bullets, with stones, with machetes. They participated more than men. Women participated a lot in killing.’ A Christian respondent who was almost killed himself by a Christian mob at a roadblock recalled that the women who attacked him were even more violent than the men of the gang.

Source: Author interviews with two residents of Jos North LGA

suggest that silent killings continued well into 2011 (*Nigerian Observer*, 2011). The year 2010 ended with the Christmas Eve bombings that detonated in predominantly Christian market areas, when residents were making final purchases for the festivities. According to Human Rights Watch, 107 people died in the bomb attacks, and numerous people were wounded (HRW, 2011). An Islamist group calling itself Jama'atu Ahlus-Sunnah Lidda' Awati Wal Jihad, which is the official name of the Maiduguri-based Boko Haram, claimed responsibility for the bombings. State officials, Islamic clerics, journalists, and residents in Jos doubt the authenticity of this claim.⁴⁰ The perpetrators were never fully identified and the apparent lack of serious investigation has been worrisome. The bombings were swiftly followed by renewed inter-communal fighting within the centre of Jos. The 2010 Christmas Eve bombings were a novelty, and the threat is real that they could become a regular feature of this local war. Smaller bomb blasts and a number of attempted bombings followed during the first months of 2011.

At least 857 people died in the January 2010 Jos riot, the Kuru Karama and Dogo Nahauwa massacres, and the 2010 Christmas bombings. While it is difficult to estimate how many people died in the 'silent killings', the total death toll for 2010 certainly exceeds 1,000 victims. Human Rights Watch also estimates more than 1,000 victims for 2010 (HRW, 2011), while both Muslim and Christian representatives claim higher victim numbers for the January and March 2010 violence. The actual number of victims may therefore reach well beyond 1,000.

The current situation

Small-scale violent incidents continued into 2011. Nigerian newspapers report cases of public buses being stopped and passengers being selected and killed according to religious identity, simple market transactions sparking violent clashes, and private vehicles being attacked after taking a wrong turn into settlements dominated by the other religious group.⁴¹ The Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria stated that Fulani herders in Plateau State had about 219 members killed and 7,000 cows stolen in January 2011; it should be noted that these numbers appear very high (*Weekly Trust*, 2011).

There is little trust between the two sides. Each regularly accuses the other of collecting weapons and making preparations for fresh attacks. The proliferation of arms in the whole region and their acquisition by community groups has been reported over the past years.⁴² Many residents believe that 'big men' sponsor the purchase of arms. But in some cases it seems that local communities collect money for their purchase under the banner of self-defence. Only the presence and rapid deployment of the joint military and riot police Special Task Force (STF) prevents small-scale clashes from escalating. But the STF is unable to prevent small deadly clashes, silent killings, or bomb attacks completely.


The segregation of communities is proceeding rapidly. At the end of 2010, before the Christmas bomb blasts, residents had again begun to venture into neighbourhoods dominated by the other religious group to carry out commercial activities. Just five months later, following several attacks around the Jos bus terminal, traffic routes became segregated. After the 2008 riot, some residents were still willing to build up their destroyed houses for a second or third time, trusting that they could live peacefully once again among their neighbours of another faith. Today, even families whose houses have not been destroyed voluntarily move into areas dominated by their own religious group. Voluntary and forced displacements have reshaped the city of Jos.

Prejudice and hate preaching remain problems on both sides. Stories circulate that accuse the other religious group of inflating victim numbers. Some even claim that deceased members of the other religious community were ‘wrongly’ presented as victims of the own community to exaggerate casualty numbers.⁴³ Among Christians, the principle of ‘an eye for an eye’ finds many supporters. Uncompromising attitudes are also a problem on the Muslim side, with hate preaching sometimes being broadcast on the streets through mosque loud-speakers. Religious communities find themselves under pressure when advocating the need to remain peaceful. People want to see measures being taken to improve their safety. Among the youths, calls for retaliation and revenge are significant. A Christian church member recalled a discussion that took place in 2010:

Some people felt that the churches needed to be more militant, that we were too stupid, that we were too naïve, just relying on prayer. God is not going to come down and fight for us. Some people thought that no, what is our Christian testimony, we cannot, because we are under attack, change our Christian testimony.⁴⁴

The understanding of ‘being under attack’ and only practising ‘self-defence’ is deeply entrenched in such accounts. Local communities—both Christian and Muslim—defend their youth as engaging in ‘self-defence’. This interpretation largely prevents intervention against perpetrators, both gang and militia leaders, in urban and rural areas. For example, in reference to the single most deadly massacre, in which about 700 Muslims were killed in Yelwa in 2004, the national CAN president, Archbishop Peter Akinola, stated:

I don’t have records of Christian groups going out deliberately to attack. The church says turn the other cheek, but now there is no other cheek to turn. Some Christians are struggling for survival in their land (HRW, 2005, p. 36).

The statement was delivered despite the broad and detailed media reporting on the Yelwa massacre. 



IV. Violence prevention and peace-building efforts

Since the 2001 violence, there has been one dialogue forum after the other, discussing how to co-exist peacefully. But it didn't really help.⁴⁵

Back in 2001, a Nigerian journalist painted an all too accurate picture of the potential developments ahead: the 'new Jos would host a series of seminars and workshops on conflict resolution, yet similar to Kaduna, no praise for the governor's peace efforts will convince any average Muslim to live in a Christian-dominated area, or vice versa' (Africa News, 2001). Indeed, numerous violence prevention and peace-building efforts, conferences, and workshops have taken place since the first major riot in 2001. Some of these initiatives may have had limited but important positive effects. Yet, due to the overall lack of political will, the protracted conflict has only worsened.

In order to comprehend the current situation in Plateau State it is important to understand why many well-designed instruments, such as an early warning system or multi-stakeholder dialogue forums, have not achieved sustainable results. The failure of state-sponsored, widely publicized peace-building initiatives has aggravated frustration and disillusionment among the people of Jos. Nevertheless, there are several courageous grassroots initiatives that improve communication and cooperation among individuals and local communities of different religious backgrounds. It is beyond the scope of this study to evaluate peace-building and violence prevention initiatives in Jos and rural Plateau State or to provide an exhaustive analysis of every programme or initiative.⁴⁶ Instead, this report offers an overview on violence reduction and peace-building efforts as a first step towards generating a complete picture of the situation in Jos and the rural areas of Plateau State.

Early warning

Before the 2001 crisis, no formal early warning system was in place in Jos. Contacts between community and religious leaders, local government officials, and the security forces were mostly informal and did not reflect the real potential for ethno-religious violence. A few local NGOs were aware of the risk of violent escalation in early 2001. Human Rights Watch has recorded

TABLE 1 Typology of violence prevention and reduction efforts

Type	Actors	Notes
Policing	Special Task Force (STF) comprising mobile police and military forces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quells riots; prevents violence escalating; little effect in preventing small-scale violent clashes and ‘silent killings’; lack of prosecution of perpetrators; limited efficiency in preventing illegal arms trade; lack of violence prevention on Jos rural outskirts • Severe criticism of STF for delayed response; extra-judicial killings; firing live ammunition on residents fleeing clashes; arbitrary arrests; general brutality; lack of neutrality • Recent appraisal for violence prevention in 2011 and an overall improved security situation
Government-led peace-building initiatives	Plateau State government, civil servants, security forces, community and religious leaders, women and youth representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2002 Peace Summit: criticized for failing to engage stakeholders with strong grassroots support • 2004 Peace Conference: criticized for failing to organize open discussion of conflicts and grievances; no engagement with the most relevant community stakeholders
Early warning	US Agency for International Development’s Conflict Abatement through Local Mitigation (CALM), 2005–10, a project with local NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early warning and response system has never become fully functional • Lack of adequate and timely response to early warning signals by security forces
Youth sensitization	Local NGOs (including the Damietta Peace Initiative, Interfaith Mediation Centre, Justice Development and Peace/Caritas, and the Young Ambassadors for Community Peace and Inter-Faith Foundation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops, youth camps, soccer matches, and other social activities • Participants report positive effects and personal transformation; difficulties in reaching routine perpetrators, thugs, and gang leaders • Too early to assess overall impact on violence-prone communities
Urban community arrangements	Local community and religious leaders, elders, residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local peace agreements and assurances of nonviolence; negotiation and conflict management; establishment of mixed youth patrols • Dadin Kowa, for example, remained nonviolent
Rural community arrangements	Traditional and religious leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peace agreements and local conflict management and resolution, prevention of violent escalation, as in Bokkos LGA

that during the days preceding the September 2001 crisis, the Civil Liberties Organization, Community Action for Popular Participation, and the Christian Foundation for Social Justice and Equality alerted state police and government authorities to what they perceived as imminent threats to peace. Unfortunately, the authorities and the security forces failed to respond to the warnings and the police were ill-prepared (HRW, 2001, pp. 6–7). The governor had even travelled abroad, despite ample warning signs of trouble ahead (Best, 2007, p. 82).

After the state of emergency, from 2005 to 2010, the US Agency for International Development (USAID) project ‘Conflict Abatement through Local Mitigation’ (CALM) supported Plateau State—among other Nigerian states—in violence reduction efforts. The CALM project objectives were ‘to prevent and reduce conflict by strengthening the capacity of Nigerian society to address the factors responsible for violent conflicts’ (USAID Nigeria, 2009, p. v). In its mid-term evaluation report, the agency finds that ‘conflict early warning has not evolved through the CALM program into a fully designed “system” with clear policies, processes, and protocols for information gathering, analysis, reporting, and rapid response’ (USAID Nigeria, 2009, p. vi). For Plateau State, the report summarizes:

Communication with the critical information network of youth and community organizations is intermittent and unreliable. And, perhaps most important, the analysis, warning and response mechanisms seemingly failed, as the November 2008 election-related riots in Jos amply illustrate the pressing need for an effective early warning and response system (USAID Nigeria, 2009, pp. 24–25).

A core aspect of a functioning early warning system is timely and adequate response by security forces. Such a response was entirely lacking in 2001 and 2008. The repeated failure of early warning and peace-building activities further damaged communication networks. Local residents have pointed out to the author that even if they hear rumours, they are afraid to call friends or colleagues of the other religious group for fear of being accused of instigating violence because the other side might strike first in ‘self-defence’.

Security forces

The immediate response of the state government to violent unrest has been the deployment of military forces in addition to riot police, and the declaration of dusk-to-dawn curfews. During the state of emergency in 2004, efforts were made to collect illegal weapons, particularly in Southern Plateau. After the 2008 crisis, an STF comprising military (Nigerian army, navy, and air

force) and police forces was established. It regularly patrolled well-known flashpoints within the city to quell further unrest. The STF engaged in weapons searches at checkpoints on the roads leading to Jos. In 2010, a constant heavy military presence remained within the city to secure an uneasy calm.

Since both the police and the military are federal institutions, their officers are usually not drawn from the immediate locality. Nevertheless, the polarization between religious communities also affects the impartiality of the security forces. Police officers and soldiers have long been blamed for being partial and part of the problem. Christians accuse soldiers of siding with Muslims; Muslims blame police officers for supporting Christians. The use of fake uniforms in violent attacks further undermines the effectiveness of security forces and fosters fears among the population. Christian residents have even demanded the withdrawal of security forces although their heavy presence keeps small-scale fighting from turning into full-blown riots. On 31 January 2011, Christian women dressed in black demonstrated against the presence of the STF, which they perceived as biased (*Leadership*, 2011). Muslim women clad in white held a counter-protest against the removal of soldiers (BBC, 2011a). Both the military and the police are feared for arbitrary killings and have reportedly shot at individuals fleeing violent scenes (HRW, 2008).

Owing to the expectation of violent protests during the national elections in April 2011, the security forces were on high alert and Jos remained largely calm. However, post-election violence rocked neighbouring Kaduna and Bauchi states, among other places. Although Buhari supporters also started protesting in Jos and a number of people were injured, the heavy intervention of security forces with tear gas dispersed the mobs relatively quickly in strategic areas. Two military helicopters also hovered over the city to monitor clashes and identify trouble spots for rapid intervention (*Vanguard*, 2011).

The 2002 Peace Summit

In 2002, the government established the Plateau State Peace and Reconciliation Committee. It was made up of elders, community and religious leaders, and representatives of women's and youth groups and students. Former governor Dariye also established an interactive forum designed to facilitate communication with grassroots leaders, such as ward and village heads, traditional rulers, and local government officials. Although promising by design, the forum did not seem to have had any significant impact: 'Very little was known and heard about the forum after its establishment' (Best, 2007, p. 86). The government also organized several media campaigns to reach out to the population with messages of peace and tolerance.

Within the same year, the 2002 Peace Summit was organized. In its wake, a series of meetings and conferences were held with elders, politicians, and religious and community leaders, as well as women and youth leaders and security personnel. The objective was to discuss conflicts and grievances and to move forward with solutions for peaceful coexistence. The final communiqué affirmed the need for peace and an end to fighting and destruction. Although the summit was intended to engage a broad range of stakeholders, the Fulani representative, Useni Boro, chairman of the Miyyeti Allah Cattle Breeders Association, was prevented from attending the Peace Summit (*Daily Trust*, 2002). Best criticizes the fact that the various workshops and commissions surrounding the Peace Summit did not engage the people who had a stake in their communities and that there was no political will to implement conclusions (Best, 2007, p. 91). Meanwhile, several local government areas undertook their own small peace initiatives.

The 2004 Peace Conference

During the 2004 state of emergency, Gen. Alli organized a Plateau State Peace Conference, which met in Jos from 18 August to 21 September. Similar to the 2002 Peace Summit, the conference was preceded by several smaller meetings and workshops and attended by a broad range of stakeholders.⁴⁷ In principle, it was a well-designed instrument with the potential to transform the conflict towards peaceful resolution. But many commentators agree that the set-up of the peace conference was flawed. While it produced a communiqué that underlined the need for peaceful relations, it did not address the main issues and actors, nor did it provide durable solutions. Hausa–Fulani and Jama’atu Nasril Islam (JNI) representatives refused to sign it, lamenting that their grievances remained completely unaddressed. The final conference report reiterates that only the Berom, Anaguta, and Afizere are recognized as indigenes of Jos North LGA. A representative from the town of Yelwa commented that the conference had been ‘superficially good, but definitely not truly representative of the Plateau state residents and if anything, entrenching divisions even more deeply’ (IRIN, 2005).

The confrontation between Christian religious leaders with then President Obasanjo further poisoned the climate. Obasanjo blamed much of the Plateau crisis on the conduct of former Governor Dariye, but also voiced stark criticism of religious leaders. Christian leaders responded with strong language, condemning Obasanjo for ousting the local governor during the state of emergency and vowing to resist the waging of a ‘jihad’ in Plateau State, which is considered ‘the nerve centre of Christianity in Nigeria’ (AFP, 2004a). The CAN secretary of Kaduna made this statement: ‘Obasanjo went out of his way to attack the

Church of God. It appears he is being used by the devil to destroy Nigeria' (Madugba, 2004).

Many interview respondents said the government-sponsored peace efforts were little more than talk shops bringing lip service to the idea of peaceful coexistence. They complained that agreements made within such meetings were never fully communicated to local communities. While some of these dialogues are broadcast on television, many people are left wondering what concrete measures are undertaken to improve their safety and prevent another round of violence escalating. Muslim respondents accused the government of deliberately inviting community representatives who would 'dance to their tune' while the actual stakeholders with strong connections to the communities concerned were excluded:

I don't think anyone can give you the accurate number of dialogues, conferences and workshops we had on peace. I have been a member of many of such gatherings. They have not made any positive impact. In fact, it helps worsening the situation. Because in almost all of these meetings, the people invited are not actually the people that have any direct link or connection with the crisis. And so you can't solve a problem when you don't call the stakeholders.⁴⁸

Civil society efforts

Civil society actors have pursued a multitude of violence prevention and peace-building efforts. These include traditional leaders, NGOs, religious organizations, humanitarian relief agencies, and community-based organizations. It is beyond the scope of this report to capture all their initiatives in detail.

Before the first major riot, the Jos-based NGO Centre for Peace Initiative and Development (CEPID) organized radio and television announcements to promote peaceful coexistence, with the support of USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (HRW, 2001). CEPID also carried out workshops on peace and tolerance for youth leaders of both faiths after the September 2001 events and contributed to research and publications on the Jos conflict. The Nigerian Civil Liberties Organization, headquartered in Lagos, visited security agencies to improve communication between grassroots and security officers. The Jos-based NGO Centre for Peace Advancement in Nigeria also offered workshops, community engagement, and trainings. Staff members of the Jos-based NGO Inter-Gender undertook advocacy visits to local government officials, community leaders, and security forces to improve communication (Ityavyar, 2004). The Young Ambassadors for Community Peace and Inter-Faith Foundation organized social activities to bring together youths of different religious

backgrounds and held a peace march within the city of Jos. The Pretoria-based Damietta Peace Initiative (DPI) has built up several mixed community groups and trained facilitators in basic conflict management strategies. One notable group currently brings together Christians from Congo-Russia with Muslims from neighbouring Nassarawa Gwom, two communities that have engaged in heavy fighting in the past. Group members act as local peace agents, facilitate communication, and reach out to youths to encourage them not to join in the fighting. DPI also facilitated the establishment of women's groups in the mixed neighbourhood of Dadin Kowa, in support of violence prevention (see Box 4 on page 57). A relatively new initiative is the Muslim–Christian Youth Dialogue Initiative, set up by two youth leaders from the JNI and CAN. Their objective is to carry the top-level interfaith dialogue to the grassroots and reach the youth population.

The Kaduna-based Inter-Faith Mediation Centre repeatedly visited Jos and other towns in Plateau State, such as Yelwa, where they worked towards a peace declaration (Smock, 2006). The Centre brought together community youth leaders in metropolitan Jos after the latest riot in January 2010 (IMC, 2010). USAID promoted the concept of 'peace clubs' in secondary schools. The clubs met regularly to discuss matters relating to inter-community rela-

Box 3 Peace efforts around the 2010 Sallah celebrations

Mujab and Soraya⁴⁹ were excited when they recalled details of their latest peacemaking initiative. In mid-November 2010, they had invited Christians from neighbouring Congo-Russia to join them for the Islamic Eid-el-kabir Sallah celebrations. Mujab and Soraya are Muslims from Nassarawa Gwom, one of the central poor areas in Jos. Their neighbourhood experienced the worst of the violent clashes in 2001, 2008, and 2010. Supported by staff from the Damietta Peace Initiative, they had escorted 39 Christians from Congo-Russia through the 'no-go area' that divides the two neighbourhoods. Ten years earlier, Muslim youths had regularly gone out dancing in Congo-Russia. 'The soldiers were really worried', both proudly recalled when Christians entered a Muslim stronghold during a religious holiday.

National media crews came to film the joint celebration and many of their friends and family recognized Mujab and Soraya on the television. Exhilarated by such publicity for their courageous initiative, both planned to visit their Christian friends during Christmas, as many people in Jos used to do a decade earlier. 'I will go anywhere they invite me', Mujab proclaimed, despite the real danger of being 'silently killed' when entering the 'wrong' territory. Sadly, the 2010 Christmas Eve celebrations came to an abrupt end after several bombs killed 107 people and injured many more.

Source: Author interview with two local peace activists, Jos, December 2010

tions, religious issues, and tolerance. The Plateau State government then ordered the establishment of peace clubs in every Plateau State secondary school (USAID Nigeria, 2009). USAID also established 'Basketball for Peace (BB4P)' programmes to offer youths 'opportunities to bridge differences with others and to practice self-discipline during basketball training and competitions' (USAID Nigeria, 2009, p. 1). Locals complained that basketball was not a popular sport among Nigerian youths, who much prefer soccer. In response, local initiatives such as DPI, Justice Development and Peace/Caritas, and the Ambassadors for Peace organized soccer tournaments for at-risk youth from poor areas of the city centre.

Local NGOs face several challenges. First, there appears to be little communication and coordination between NGOs and grassroots peace initiatives. Many pursue very similar programmes of youth sensitization and workshops for peace. They all target youth groups in poor areas that are worst affected by violence. Since 2009, the Justice Development and Peace/Caritas office has tried to address this communication gap. It organized regular stakeholder meetings with other NGOs, relief agencies, and civil servants to exchange information for better coordination, particularly of emergency response activities. Most activists also admit that it is difficult to reach out to youths who have actively taken part in rioting. Core gang members from within the city or from militia groups based in small towns and villages outside of Jos are difficult to identify and to integrate into such workshops.

The deterioration of communal relations, spatial segregation, and the traumatic impact of violence also negatively affect civil society actors. Despite their aims and objectives, many activists have internalized one-sided narratives of violent incidents. Their accounts are often characterized by major omissions regarding violence perpetrated by their own religious group. Explanations for the crisis and descriptions of the current situation are often biased and distort facts and information. For example, a Christian NGO leader explained to the author in an interview that during the violent clashes within the city, the mosques would play calls for prayer day and night, but that Christians would not ring church bells or use church loudspeakers. This statement was clearly contradicted by residents who stated that both churches and mosques made use of their loudspeakers constantly during violent clashes from as early as 2001, marking the violence as 'religious'.⁵⁰ The polarization of religious communities affects the work of civil society activists, further hampering communication and cooperation.

Local journalists also struggle with such tendencies and find it difficult to report without bias. Several training workshops for journalists in relation to the communal conflict have taken place in Jos over the past few years to curb sensationalist reporting.⁵¹ Nevertheless, both sides have fiercely criticized

local and international news coverage of the Jos crisis. Muslims complained of bias in some local newspaper accounts, while Christians strongly condemned international reporting. In interviews conducted for this study, Christians claimed that articles and reports are one-sided, that Christian deaths were under-reported, and that the international media failed to understand to what extent Christians have been victimized. The Citizen's Monitoring Group, an initiative established after the January 2010 riots, claims that:

Hausa Muslims have produced an effective propaganda machine that misinforms the world that they are hated, killed and sent out from Plateau State [while] in every instance of violent outbreaks they have been the initiators (CMG, 2010, p. 8).



Some Christian journalists also subscribe to the prominent reframing of the conflict as a Muslim jihad to take over Plateau State and Nigeria as a whole. As one journalist explained the current situation to the author: ‘People down here are saying: “you cannot change our religion for us.”’⁵²

Inter-religious dialogue

The state government set up the Inter-Religious Committee for Peace and Harmony in Plateau State after the 2001 crisis. The committee is jointly chaired by the chairman of CAN in Plateau State and the Emir of Wase. During the first years, Archbishop Ignatius Kaigama and the late Emir of Wase, who died in 2010, held these posts. Both religious leaders toured through the state,

A destroyed house in one of Jos's central poor neighbourhoods. © Jana Krause



preaching peace and reaching out to local communities. Bishop Kaigama repeatedly criticized the local political elite. On the five-year anniversary of the 2001 riots, he pointed out that ‘while the common man at the grassroots had come to appreciate and understand the need for all people to live in harmony, the message was yet to sink into the minds of politicians’ (Moses, 2006). But other religious leaders and NGO staff were less optimistic about the grassroots-level impact. During interviews they stated that inter-religious peace-building efforts were met with much suspicion among ordinary people who feared that the other side could not be trusted. Some interview respondents also emphasized the responsibility of community religious leaders in actively preaching tolerance and nonviolence:

Our religious leaders need to do a lot in the way we preach. And we must be seen to practice what we preach. Looking at all the crises, you cannot divorce it from religion. So most people say it’s a religious crisis. Well, whatever it is on the part of the religious leaders, they must teach the true teachings of that religion. And then also, there is a lot of corruption, even corruption has eaten deep into churches and mosques.⁵³

At this writing, the Inter-Religious Committee was chaired by the current CAN chairman, Rev. Philip Dafes, and the new Emir of Wase, the son of the late Emir.

Community initiatives

Despite pressure on resources in the rural areas, many rural communities have managed to remain peaceful. As Blench notes, farmers and herders have established good relations in many parts of Plateau State over the past century (Blench, 2003b, p. 8). A long-established practice is the sending of young boys from indigenous groups to the Fulani herders for one or two years in exchange for cattle. Peaceful communities are notably marked by regular consultative meetings, for example in Bokkos LGA South of Jos. In response to the first Jos crisis in 2001, many indigene and Hausa community leaders arranged meetings. They agreed to remain peaceful and urged their communities to refrain from violence. Often, community leaders would follow up on such messages to guard their communities from the spill-over effects of the Jos violence. Such meetings were not held in some of the most violent areas, such as Miango, Riyom, or Vom (Blench, 2003b, p. 10). Higazi also noted that in Wase and other rural areas many mixed communities initially organized religiously mixed vigilante patrols and meetings to stem the tensions prior to the outbreak of violence (Higazi, 2008, p. 128).

Traditional leaders often facilitated the return of displaced people in the villages.⁵⁴ However, the institution of traditional rulership is itself contested. Many indigenes in the city do not accept Hausa traditional rulers within Plateau State. Christian indigene groups demanded in 2001 that all Hausa–Fulani

Box 4 Dadin Kowa: the peaceful community

The community of Dadin Kowa—located in Jos South LGA—has remained peaceful to date. Several mixed communities surround the settlement; some have seen sporadic killings (such as Rayfield) and violent clashes (such as Anglo Jos). The majority of Dadin Kowa’s population is Christian, although there is a significant Muslim minority. The population is mixed in terms of economic and social status, with large houses on the outskirts and crammed streets of poor settlements in its centre.

Women played a major role in keeping peace in the community. After the devastating 2008 crisis, more than 200 women came together with support from DPI to voice their fears regarding potential future violence. They met and discussed issues and everyday challenges against the background of the ongoing crisis. Many Christian families had fled to Dadin Kowa from violence-affected areas. Some of the women who had found security in Dadin Kowa had lost their husbands and children, their houses, and their businesses. They brought with them their grief as well as stories of atrocities and loss. The influx of displaced persons increased tensions. Many women worried that their community could soon also be affected by violence. After the gathering, the women regularly met in several smaller groups to address problems and establish dialogue with each other. The women’s groups largely managed their regular meetings on their own after several of them had received short-term training from DPI.

When violence broke out again in January 2010, these women went to their religious leaders and pleaded with them to forbid any violence and to undertake measures of violence prevention. Pastors and imams met together with several elders and agreed on a ‘peace declaration’ that was read out to the community. Elders organized local youths into mixed vigilante groups to guard the settlement against outside attackers. When youth groups from neighbouring settlements came to attack Muslims in Dadin Kowa, a local pastor successfully pleaded with them and averted violence.

Although peaceful to date, Dadin Kowa remains volatile. Some of the women could not face each other for weeks and months after the Kuru Karama and Dogo Nahauwa massacres. Everyday tensions are evident. For example, both sides hold grievances over loudspeakers during prayer times at mosques and churches. A Christian pastor said that Muslim residents had sent soldiers to ask the church not to use its loudspeakers during Muslim early morning prayers. The pastor refused on the grounds that the same early morning time represented a core Christian prayer time and could not be violated.

Source: Author interviews with residents in Dadin Kowa and other neighbourhoods in Jos

chieftancy titles be scrapped and replaced with indigenous traditional titles (HRW, 2001, p. 6). Hausa traditional rulers have complained that when they warn the government of tensions and conflicts, inaction is generally the response from the state. This undermines the position of traditional elders as they are increasingly seen as unable to stop violent escalation (Blench, 2003b, p. 10).

Reports of the Commissions of Inquiry

Several Commissions of Inquiry have been established since the clashes in Jos. Their members and findings have always been accused of bias. Results and recommendations have remained closed to the public for years. The year 2010 saw the release of the Fiberesima report on the 1994 crisis, the Niki Tobi report on the 2001 riots, and the Ajibola report on the 2008 clashes.⁵⁵ The various recommendations are largely similar. The Fiberesima Commission report recommends a fair and transparent allocation of political offices and improved equipment for police forces. It also demands that government officials and security forces take warnings and rumours transmitted by civil society actors seriously. The report reinforces the understanding that the Berom, the Anaguta, and the Afizere are the real indigenes of Jos North LGA. It indicts the Jasawa Development Association for 'belligerent activities and complicity in the riots' (R2K, 2010).

After the 2001 crisis, the Justice Niki Tobi Commission investigated the riots. The shelving of the report was resented as many groups had made the effort to present memoranda or oral evidence to the Commission (Best, 2007, p. 87). The state government claimed that publishing the report would endanger the fragile peace of Plateau State. The report confirms the findings and recommendations of the Fiberesima Commission. To reduce communal tensions, it recommends banning the blockage of public roads for both Christian and Muslim prayer services. It also condemns the use of loudspeakers by churches and mosques as illegal and inciting religious hatred. Further, it calls on the government to tackle the illegal possession of firearms in the state (R2K, 2010).

After the 2008 crisis, the reinforcement of local and national ethno-religious tensions returned to the fore. The federal government, under then President Yar'Adua, set up the administrative committee of inquiry headed by retired Gen. Emmanuel Abisoye. The state government under Jonah Jang, in turn, accused Yar'Adua of siding with the Jasawa community. Therefore, it established its own commission of inquiry, under Prince Bola Ajibola, 'on the ground that the president Yar'Adua lacked the constitutional power to do so' (Ojukwu and Onifade, 2010, p. 178). While the Ajibola report was released to the public,

the Abisoye report was not made available. The confrontation between governor and president clearly did nothing to ease tensions in Jos.

The Ajibola report recommends promoting political inclusion and participation and the release of all reports of the various commissions of inquiry. Like the Niki Tobi Commission, it calls on the government to enforce the ban on blocking streets during worship hours and on the use of mosque and church loudspeakers. The report goes further and recommends major infrastructure development within the city centre to counter slum development and improve policing. The government should acquire slums such as Angwan Rimi, Angwan Rogo, Gangare, Katako, Rikkos, and parts of Ali Kazaure and Dilimi 'to create a modern city [. . .] by roads and infrastructure such as housing estates, clinics and modern schools' (PSJCI, 2010, para. 7.4(i)). Crucially, these slum areas are mostly inhabited by the Jasawa, who fear massive expulsion from the city centre and relocation without compensation. It is clear that these poor areas need serious investment in infrastructure. Muslims in Angwan Rogo complained to the author that the government had not invested in any infrastructure over the past decade. Yet, if mishandled, urban development measures directly interlink with the voluntary or forced displacement after violent clashes according to ethno-religious identity. 🚫




Conclusions

The situation in Jos since the 2011 national and gubernatorial elections remains extremely tense. While the heavy military presence within the city tends to prevent overt collective violence, 'silent killings' continue underground. Bomb explosions constitute a real threat to resident safety in market areas and houses of worship. A decade of communal violence has reshaped the city. Today, Jos is largely characterized by religious segregation in residence, business, trade, and transportation. Humanitarian and relief agencies remain on high alert as violent clashes may erupt at any time.

This study finds that the lack of sincere conflict resolution efforts in Jos resulted in the transformation of a once-localized confrontation between political elites of different ethnic groups into a protracted communal conflict with a strong religious dimension. Subsequent to violent clashes in Jos, tensions in rural areas and small towns exploded. Urban and rural cycles of violence have reinforced different conflict clusters along the overarching religious divide. Many residents have come to understand the conflict as a religious confrontation linked to regional and national political developments. The increasing brutality of the killings over the past two years has had a traumatizing impact on the local population. This has resulted in a severe breakdown of trust and communication between religious communities. The high level of tensions, accusations that the other side is preparing for violence, and segregation severely hamper violence prevention and peace-building efforts.

The dynamics of urban violence are characterized by attacks, counter-attacks, and street battles of youth gangs and thugs. A common urban practice during riots is the blocking of major streets and the selective killing of individuals who do not recite the correct religious verses. While much of the killing in 2001 was perpetrated with knives and machetes, gunshot fatalities have become a feature of urban violence since the 2008 riot. On the outskirts of Jos, community members have commonly been attacked and murdered with machetes, while gunshots were used to expel villagers from their dwellings. Within Jos, much of the youth violence is organized along neighbourhood vigilante networks that have been transformed into community self-defence groups. Despite numerous clashes, these groups do not appear to have fully formed into standing gangs with citywide command structures.

In contrast, within areas of rural Plateau State, well-armed temporary militia groups have been formed over the past nine years. They have received military-style training and are highly mobile. These groups constitute a significant threat to safety in Plateau, but also in neighbouring states. They were not adequately disarmed during the state of emergency. In general, a large number of weapons remain in circulation, as the numerous gunshot wounds and fatalities amply demonstrate.

With the re-election of Governor Jonah Jang, a solution to the struggle over indigene rights and political representation is not in sight. Jos North LGA appears to be set for another term of local politics as a zero-sum game between the indigene and the Jasawa elites. Meanwhile, the threat of further riots remains real. However, the position of Jang and his supporters is not uncontested among indigene politicians. Some have come to realize that in the long term a compromise with the Hausas may be inevitable to stop the fighting. The interim chair of the Plateau State Conflict Management and Mitigation Regional Council⁵⁶ argues that Hausa economic and numeric dominance in Jos North needs to be accepted: 'People say "over my dead body", but it will happen, that's yesterday's problem' (IRIN, 2010b). A solution to the conflict over indigene rights and political representation will need to take the regional and national dimension of the issue into account. At the same time, Plateau State cannot wait until the Nigerian federation agrees on an amendment to the current constitution to prioritize citizenship over indigene rights. 



Endnotes

- 1 The term 'indigene' refers to Nigerian citizens who hold 'indigene certificates' issued by local governments and who reside in the state that issued the certificate. The notion is meant to apply to individuals and groups that are native to a federal state, in contrast to the 'settlers'. Who qualifies as an indigene is highly contested because many so-called 'settler' groups have lived in their places of residence for several generations. See also Box 1.
- 2 These figures are based on victim numbers reported by members of the local communities, as discussed in this *Working Paper*. Human Rights Watch also estimates that at least 700 people died in 2008 and at least 1,000 in 2010 (HRW, 2008; 2011).
- 3 Author interview with a local resident, Jos.
- 4 The author thanks Philip Ostien for pointing this out.
- 5 However, a spokesperson also indicated that these figures were not fully reliable, given that limited registration of internally displaced persons had taken place (IRIN, 2005).
- 6 Author interviews with civil society representatives, Jos. See also Blench (2004) for more detailed information on illegal arms proliferation in Plateau State.
- 7 Author interview with local residents, Jos.
- 8 See the CIA World Factbook on Nigeria for detailed numbers on total population and ethnic groups (CIA, n.d.). Estimates for the total population of Nigeria vary; the Population Division of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs estimates a population of 158,423,000 for 2010 (UNDESA, n.d.).
- 9 Other, larger indigene ethnic groups on the Plateau include the Ngas, Goemai, and Tarok.
- 10 Other Hausa groups in northern states have their own designations, such as the Kanawa in Kano. The author thanks Adam Higazi for pointing this out.
- 11 See also Paden (2005) for an overview of Muslim identities and religious movements in the north. See Plotnicov (1967, pp. 28–39) on the historical significance of Jos.
- 12 The author thanks Philip Ostien for pointing this out. For background on the Sokoto Caliphate, see Last (1967) and Paden (2005).
- 13 See Blench et al. (2006, pp. 59–67), Best (2007, pp. 17–21), and Plotnicov (1967, pp. 42–48) for further details on the transition from colonial to post-colonial rule in Jos and the politics of local traditional leaders.
- 14 For a comprehensive overview on the history of Nigerian federalism in general, and of Plateau State in particular, see Suberu (2001, pp. 91, 102).
- 15 See Blench et al. (2006) for an overview of traditional rulers in northern Nigeria.
- 16 See Last (2008) on the notion of 'mental closure'.
- 17 However, Pasquini and Alexander (2005) also point out that farmers in Plateau managed to adapt farming practices in response to soil degradation.
- 18 See HRW (2006) for further details.
- 19 Author interview with a Muslim elder, Jos.

- 20 See also HRW (2006).
- 21 Blench also provides more details on interactions between herders and farmers.
- 22 The author thanks Yakubu Joseph for pointing this out.
- 23 For details on the Kaduna riots in 2000 and 2002 and victim numbers, see HRW (2003).
- 24 Boko Haram means 'Western education is sin'; *boko* is Hausa, *haram* is Arabic.
- 25 See, for example, HRW (2001, p. 5)
- 26 Author interviews, Jos. This type of statement was made by several Christian residents, civil society members, and religious leaders in Jos.
- 27 For instance, former Christian Association of Nigeria chairman Rev. Yakubu Pam linked the Jos conflict to the term 'jihad' (Best, 2007, p. 43).
- 28 Author interviews, Jos. This type of statement was made by several Christian residents and civil society members. See also, for example, publications by the Stefanos Foundation (n.d.).
- 29 Author interviews with residents from Jos North LGA.
- 30 Author interviews with residents, Jos; the findings are confirmed in Plateau State Muslim Ummah (2010).
- 31 Author interviews with a resident and a civil society representative, Jos.
- 32 See also Best (2008) for details on violence in southern Plateau State.
- 33 Paragraph based on Higazi (2008). For more details on the rural violence, see also HRW (2005). For main types of weapons circulating in Plateau State, see Blench (2004, pp. 33–34).
- 34 See, for example, *This Day* (2006b).
- 35 Dung-Gwom and Rikko (2009, p. 7) cite the CAN Memorandum to the House of Representative Ad Hoc Committee on the Jos Crisis. This number of displaced is also confirmed by the Muslim Community; see Jos North Muslim Ummah (2009a).
- 36 Author interviews with representatives of the Jasawa community, Jos.
- 37 Both views featured strongly in author interviews with residents, journalists, and civil society members in Jos.
- 38 See Higazi (2011, pp. 26–28) for details on the violence in Bukuru and the outskirts of Jos.
- 39 For details, see HRW (2005) on the Yelwa attack; see also ACLED (n.d.). For academic analysis, see Best (2008) and Higazi (2008; 2011).
- 40 For example, see *This Day* (2010); Al Jazeera (2010).
- 41 See Adinoyi (2011a; 2011b); HRW (2011).
- 42 Author interviews with civil society representatives and journalists, Jos. See also Blench (2004).
- 43 Author interview with residents, Jos.
- 44 Author interview with a church activist, Jos.
- 45 Author interview with a civil society representative, Jos.
- 46 See also the documentation of peace efforts by Best (2007, p. 80).
- 47 See Danfulani (2006) for details on the peace conference.
- 48 Author interview with a Muslim community leader, Jos.
- 49 Names have been changed.
- 50 See, for example, HRW (2001).
- 51 See, for example, Best and Saidu (2007).
- 52 Author interview with a journalist, Jos.
- 53 Author interview with a Muslim resident, Jos.
- 54 For a detailed study on the role of traditional rulers in the Plateau and northern Nigeria, see Blench et al. (2006).
- 55 For details, see R2K (2010).
- 56 The Council was established with support from USAID via the 2005–10 CALM project.



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