



1.21.2010

NIGERIA “Fake soldiers” spread fear in Jos

Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) has received reports alleging that men dressed in military uniforms are targeting Christians inside their own homes in Jos, Plateau State.

The attacks are said to have occurred overnight during the curfew imposed to quell violence sparked by a Muslim attack on a Catholic Church last Sunday.

According to one church source: ‘Men dressed in army uniforms, whose true identity is yet to be fully ascertained, are going from house to house pulling out residents and shooting them dead. This is happening in Anglo Jos, Eto Baba and Tinna Junction, Nasarawa, where the crisis started on Sunday.’ Another local source reports that at least two “fake soldiers” were apprehended last night in the Hwolshe area.

Several men were also spotted changing into military attire in an area close to the home of the Anglican Archbishop of Jos. Although the men were chased away, the incident has raised fears for the safety of Archbishop Kwashi, who regularly speaks out in the international media, and was recently interviewed on the current violence.

These events come as the 24 hour curfew was changed to 5pm to 10am. However, in the words of one church leader: “The lifting of the curfew must not be mistaken as a return to normalcy.” Many people are reported to be fleeing Jos altogether.

Tina Lambert, CSW’s Advocacy Director said: “The issue of ‘fake soldiers’ is an extremely worrying one, as it is impossible to distinguish them from legitimate members of the armed forces until it is too late. In such circumstances it is not surprising that Jos remains insecure and many continue to flee. It is vital that measures are taken to ensure the safety of the local Christian community, and to uncover and bring to justice those who are behind this appalling tactic”.