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NIGERIA Pastors buried in Bauchi as tensions continue in Jos

Funerals will be held today for the Reverend and Mrs Ishaya Kada of the Church of Christ in Nigerian (COCIN) Boto in Tafawa Balewa, Bauchi State, who were hacked to death and burnt to ashes by Muslim assailants on 12 April. The couple had only recently returned to the area after their church was burnt down in January by Muslim refugees from Jos.

Following the murders, police in Tafawa Balewa interrogated the local Village Head and three others, who disclosed the identities of the perpetrators. As the search for the killers continues, the Governor of Bauchi, Isah Yuguda, has expressed his condolences, and has contributed towards funeral expenses and the repair of the church building. Governor Yuguda also promised to assist the couple's children with the costs of their education.

Meanwhile, tensions persist in Plateau State after a suspected bomb exploded prematurely on 12 April in a room in the Dadin Kuwa area of Jos, severely injuring three young Muslims, who are currently being interrogated in hospital. In addition, Ishaku Sunday, a youth who vanished on 5 April while grazing cattle with a friend in the Vom area has been found alive, but with severe machete wounds. Ishaku describes being attacked by four Fulani men armed with swords. His friend's mutilated corpse was discovered the day after their disappearance. Fulani men are also said to be responsible for hacking another man to death on 14 April in Kassa, Barkin Ladi.

The continuing attacks and "silent killings" during curfew hours have caused many to question the army's willingness or ability to protect them. There is also growing speculation that an attack on Kuru Jenta on 11 March, which targeted two community leaders, may have been carried out by rogue military elements.

Mervyn Thomas, Chief Executive of Christian Solidarity Worldwide, says: "Our prayers are with the Kada's children on this sad day, and we commend the Bauchi authorities for proactively pursuing those responsible for these appalling murders. CSW also commends Governor Yuguda, for his conciliatory actions which will assist in assuaging fears and fostering reconciliation. However, we remain deeply concerned at the continuing insecurity in Plateau State, and at renewed speculation that rogue military elements may be behind some of the violence there. We call on the Nigerian Federal Government to urgently review and adjust current security arrangements, and to take decisive action against military personnel who are found to be involved in extrajudicial executions or attempted assassinations".