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NIGERIA Journalists become the latest victims in Plateau State violence

Two journalists working for a Church of Christ in Nigeria (COCIN) publication have become the latest casualties of the violence that has afflicted Plateau State since January.

The bodies of Nathan Sheleph Dabak, Deputy Editor of *The Light Bearer*, and reporter Sunday Gyang Bwede were found in the mortuary of the Jos University Teaching Hospital (JUTH) on the afternoon of 25 April, a day after they left their office to interview a local politician.

According to a COCIN press release dated 26 April, the men were intercepted and stabbed to death by a mob at Gadan-Bako, Nassarawa Gwong on the morning of 24 April as they travelled to interview the Hon. Bulus Kaze, the member representing the Jos East constituency. The alarm was raised after a friend who called Mr. Dabak at 9.30 that morning reported that his phone had been answered by a stranger who boasted: "We have killed all of them; you can do your worst."

Plateau State has been wracked with violence since Sunday 18 January, when around 200 Muslim youths launched an attack on church goers in the Nassarawa Gwong area of Jos. As the death toll mounts, doubts over the efficacy of current security arrangements persist. Meanwhile, church leaders continue to advocate non-retaliation, and Rev. Dr Pandat Yamsat, President of COCIN, has appealed to church members to "remain calm" despite the security lapses, and to "cry out to God and allow Him to take vengeance."

In an unrelated incident, a third journalist, Edo Sule Ugbagwu who worked for *The Nation* newspaper, was shot dead at his home on the outskirts of Lagos last weekend.

Mervyn Thomas, Chief Executive of Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) says: "Our thoughts and prayers are with all who are grieving their loved ones, and are particularly with the families of Mr Dabak, Mr Bwede and Mr. Ugbagwu at this time. We call on the local authorities to make every effort to track down the perpetrators of these appalling acts of violence. With little confidence in the current security arrangements in Plateau State due to the continuing loss of life, a comprehensive review must be undertaken as a matter of urgency. This is a vital prerequisite for the restoration of peace to the area."