



WANEP

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Press Release

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The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding Nigeria on behalf of its over 300 member organisations spread across the six geo political zone wishes to express deepest concern and disenchantment to the recent religious related violence in the city of Jos, Plateau State which occurred between Sunday 17 to Tuesday January 19, 2010.

This unfortunate crisis, triggered by deeper rooted distrust and suspicion among Christians and Muslims residents in Jos North and South Local Governments have resulted in reported fatalities of more than 200 deaths and, serious injury to more than 700 persons and the internal displacement of more than 10,000 persons

The Network condemns this recent renewal of violent and attacks on innocent citizens, homes, churches, mosques as well as peoples' means of livelihood by people hiding under religious extremism to wreck havoc in Jos metropolis. Worse still is its impact on vulnerable groups especially women and children, the disabled, the sick and the elderly many of whom are still traumatized by the preceding November 28, 2008 religious crisis suffered by the city.

WANEP-Nigeria appreciates the prompt action to restore order and calm by the State Governor of Plateau State through the enforcement of dusk to dawn curfew; the Inspector General of Police for the immediate deployment of Police to quell the violence and Chief of Army Staff, Lt. General Abdulrahman Danbazau for the deployment of the army to maintain order in the city.

The Network also expresses appreciation for health institutions, civil society organizations and volunteers currently working tirelessly to attend to the plethora of IDP in more than 12 camps in the city.

However, we wish to express concern on the dangerous trend of spread of religious violence bordering on religious extremism laden with political undertones which is rapidly polarizing communities along religious sentiments across the States of the Northern region.

We also express concern on the report of reported complicity of bias and violent extremism by some security operatives which contributed by the exacerbation of the crisis.

WANEP-Nigeria also expresses displeasure on the slow action from the white paper from the commission of inquiry set up by the Federal and State government on the November 28, political crisis which is suspected as the trigger for the current crisis in the State.

WANEP Nigeria therefore calls for the following:

- The need for security operatives deployed to maintain order and calm in the city to be sensitive to the rights of vulnerable groups especially women and Children in the IDP camps.
- An immediate set up of a task force consisting of an all involving Stakeholders committee by the State Government to perform a short term assessment of the immediate and remote cause of the violence and its relationship with the white paper released by the November 28 Commission of inquiry towards effective resolution of the religious crisis.
- A comprehensive program on arms control with a view to managing proliferation of illegal arms in Jos metropolis and its environs.
- Adequate care and provision of immediate needs of Internally Displaced Persons especially women and children: a proper conducive, secured environment should be provided as camp for the internally displaced persons and immediate gender specific relief materials and support should be given to the vulnerable and displaced persons
- The enforcement of order should be followed by engaging dialogue between the State Government, security and religious leaders on short and medium term actions needed to address the immediate and remote causes of the present crisis and perpetrators to justice.

- Interfaith dialogue should be kick-started as well as joint problem solving platforms should be created with the inclusion of all community leaderships in Jos Metropolis
- The development of an early warning and response mechanisms by relevant government agencies in partnership with civil society organisations and faith based institutions to proactively respond to causal factors of religious violence in Plateau State
- The immediate support from International Community to support the interventions of local groups, NGOs and other community based groups currently providing humanitarian action in the city.

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