

FIRST DRAFT
HART VISIT TO NIGERIA
April 8-15 2009

Introduction.

As a response to repeated episodes of violence in recent months, there is cause for serious concern regarding the security and welfare of many communities in the northern States and in Plateau State.

There is evidence of deep concern over the use of such violence and societal divisions to destabilise Nigeria; terrorism is feared as a major threat to the unity and prosperity of Nigeria.

HART has been involved with humanitarian programmes in Plateau and Kano States for several years. Following the outbursts of violence and the reports of associated suffering of the victims of violence, it was deemed appropriate to visit our partners to obtain information of humanitarian needs and of violations of human rights.

Visits were made to Bauchi, Jos and Bari (in Kano State).

Executive Summary.

1. The deliberate, calculated and repeated use of violence may result in the destabilisation of Nigeria.
2. The frequently cited reasons for this violence as being politically motivated are inaccurate representations of the reality. Similarly, inter-tribal and economic tensions or clashes over the use of land may be contributory factors but evidence shows these are not the primary motivations of those instigating the violence and exploiting the tensions.
3. First hand accounts and corroborative evidence demonstrate the primarily religious motivation of the initial aggressors: mobs of well-armed (with machetes, guns etc.) and uniformed militants shouting Islamic slogans attack Christian communities; churches are always their first targets and Christian homes and businesses are destroyed while Muslim properties are left intact.
4. Christian communities also feel vulnerable as the security forces are sometimes complicit with the militants. Although they eventually intervened in Jos, after repeated requests from the State Governor to the Federal authorities to restore order, sufficient delay elapsed for serious violence to be perpetrated; in Bauchi, they reportedly stood by and did not intervene effectively to protect the Christians.
5. Anxiety is compounded by a disturbing international dimension to the attacks, with reports of mercenaries from Chad, Niger and Saudi Arabia participating in the attacks – about 75 have been arrested.
6. These attacks are causing a dilemma for the Christian communities, who have been reluctant on theological grounds to engage in retaliation. Some Christians do undertake self-defence but the asymmetry of numbers of human casualties and properties destroyed reflects the identity of the primary aggressors. The Christians are generally unarmed and incapable of adequately defending themselves.
7. In the recent riots in Jos, some Muslims were killed by security forces when they responded to a call to attack from a mosque and broke the curfew.
8. Those providing the most rapid information to the media are those who were prepared with advance information of the planned attacks. The Muslim

reports of events have invariably preceded the information disseminated by the Christian communities. In addition, concern has been expressed over several years by perceived biased reporting by the BBC Hausa reporter who is a Muslim and is seen by local people as excessively partial.

9. One example of manipulation of information given to the media was reflected in the concern that Christian families were deeply worried by the problems in providing adequate funeral for their dead when the corpses of the loved ones were taken by Muslim Red Cross workers to a mosque where they were photographed and portrayed as Muslim casualties.
10. The degree of cruelty inflicted on victims is often at the extreme end of the scale of barbarity: people burnt alive; use of mobile phones of victims to give messages to family members such as 'We have killed your daughter for you'. (See below for examples).
11. Reportedly, these episodes of violence, with well prepared propaganda, are used by militants to raise money for their cause. This phenomenon of what is called 'capitalist jihad' has reportedly raised large sums of money from sources in Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Libya.
12. The destruction of Christian properties has been associated with a policy by Muslims to purchase the remains by taking advantage of the dismay and vulnerability families who are in a state of shock and bereft of all their belongings. The purpose is to expel the Christians and to take over the area for Muslim occupation – and, in due course, to achieve electoral victories. The realisation by Christians of this policy and their attempts to forestall it are reflected in the writings on the walls of many ruined churches and homes claiming 'This property is NOT FOR SALE'. (See photos).
13. Another cause for concern is the population expansion through people moving into new areas, buying land and settling. Many are Muslims who practice polygamy and who will therefore change the demographic structure of a district with political implications for electoral constituencies. There is also concern over the fact that, as their numbers grow, they become 'land hungry' and wish to acquire more land, with detrimental consequences for the indigenes.
14. To date, no resources have been made available to the Christian communities to assist with rebuilding their homes and churches. Such rebuilding is urgently needed as the rainy season will create even more acute suffering for people living in refugee camps or the ruins of their homes.
15. The alarming repetition of attacks over recent months is cause for concern: Jos in November 2008; Bauchi in February 2009 and Niger over Easter celebrations in April. Such frequency creates feelings of insecurity for the Christian communities, even in areas where they are in a majority and, if unchecked, may build up a propensity to the destabilisation of regions and, eventually, of the nation.
16. Clearly, the majority of Muslims have lived peaceably with their neighbours and are not implicated in the violence which has occurred recently – or the many previous episodes over recent decades. However, there has been an expansion of militancy associated with radicalisation by some

mosques, together with an influx of foreign mercenaries (see above, point 4) as well as ‘hoodlums’ – alienated, unemployed youth who are paid to carry out attacks by those who are instigating them or who are ready to participate, once violence erupts. However, it is not these ‘hoodlums’ who are the primary instigators, as so often reported in the press. There are currently reports that gangs are being sent into different places ready for the next episodes of violence.

17. As already stated, the media tend to portray these outbursts of violence as politically motivated. However, all the evidence shows that these attacks are undertaken with religious motivation. For example: there would be no incentives for foreign mercenaries to be involved if the basis for the violence was political grievance; the first targets are always churches; the militants characteristically chant Islamic phrases; violence is often accompanied by verbal threats such as the intention to evict all Christians from an area; even in the number of cases we heard, in at least two victims were given the choice of conversion to Islam or death and in another case, a victim was killed by having his throat cut because his assassin was angered by a reference to Jesus. It is important that the motivation for the violence is not misrepresented, as inaccurate understanding will hinder appropriate responses.
18. Attempts to promote interfaith harmony and understanding are being promoted through interfaith dialogue. Response to the violence needs to be many-stranded. Interfaith dialogue can be an effective strand - if it is engaged in on every side by totally committed people with a genuine commitment to peace and the steps needed to maintain it. Without this dedication, it is seen by many as a diversionary tactic and as therefore as potentially harmful.
19. There is a need to promote hope for a peaceful solution. Essential measures to achieve this include the urgent and adequate provision of resources for reconstruction of damaged and destroyed properties and the bringing to justice of those who are guilty of violence – so that they are not seen to be getting away with any crimes committed with impunity.
20. Such measures are urgently needed if the situation is not to deteriorate and threaten not only the safety of the people in many parts of Nigeria but also the very stability of Nigeria itself.
21. It is always necessary to ask ‘Who profits from violence, from instability, from people being driven from their homes and neighbourhoods?’

In conclusion, it is important not to dismiss these incidents as merely a hopeless and never-ending story of hate. Peace is possible. Commitment to the fulfilment of all human rights as enshrined in the UDHR (Universal Declaration of Human Rights), to which Nigeria is a signatory, by State and Federal Governments is essential. And international support, including a well-informed response by the media, can be of great assistance.

In this context, we have respect for the position adopted by the Governor of Plateau State, who worked hard to promote security for the people of Jos and who has instigated an Enquiry to ascertain the details of the crisis. We also respect his decision to appoint a Muslim to chair this Enquiry, to encourage confidence in the impartiality of investigation. The Governor is strongly committed to the unity of

Nigeria and to resisting those forces of violence working to destabilise the country.

Appendix 1.
HART's Humanitarian Project, Bari, Kano State.

HART has been working with local partners to help to rebuild a Primary Health Care Clinic in a rural area near the town of Bari in Kano State. During this visit we met Musa Yaro, a Community Health Worker, who established Clinic with a British nurse, Mary Price Bray, in 1981-2. During the late 1990s, he left for Jos who work there in 'Diaspora', because Christians were denied all rights, including employment, by State and local governments. The clinic was left to fall into disrepair.

This theme of discrimination and the repercussions for local people was repeated many times. One of the local youth leaders summed it up:

'If you work as Christians, one way or another, they will sack you. In this local area we are about 55% Christian, but we cannot get employment. Although we have diplomas, we can't get health care or education at any level. As a Christian you have to go to private schools; but this is difficult. We can't go to polytechnic or any higher education, including professional education such as nursing. Even if you qualify elsewhere, they will deny a job. The system is to make people suffer such discrimination that they will convert to Islam'.

Now, the clinic has come within the jurisdiction of a new Diocese and the new Bishop of Bari is committed to building up this place in a number of ways:

- a) To become a self-supporting church. 'For example, among ourselves, we raised \$5k for the ceiling, the windows and the iron doors; by 2010 we hope to complete the rest of the work: plastering, plumbing, electrics, floor and glass for windows'.
- b) Also, he and the community borrowed money as a Diocese to establish a breeze-block enterprise (1.7m N) to use for themselves and to sell to customers – and also to provide employment and to generate a profit to complete the work of the clinic and school.
- c) Vision for the clinic: Our target to render Christian service to humanity and to develop a healthy community. The clinic will also be self-financing.
- d) There are at least 2 doctors and 2 nurses willing to come to work at the Clinic when completed. (Nurses' salaries are c. £780-1k pa, but they will probably require less as the staff would come with a vocational commitment).
- e) The Diocese has started to pay for land (180k on loan has already been acquired) to raise food and money for the local people. *'We want drive hunger away from our people'*. Local people work the land which provides employment.
- f) Great progress has also been made with the provision of education.

Last summer there were 36 pupils; now there are 145. The number of teachers has increased from one to four plus the Headmaster. There is still a need for 2 more teachers and 2 more classrooms – at present two years are being taught simultaneously for two years.

'We need to raise money to augment teachers' salaries from minimum of 5kN per month to 7k. (This represents about £312 (UK) pa; payment for food & accommodation is not needed as teachers are self-sufficient).

The costs for 2 additional classrooms is c. 2m N (c. £4k)

'All hands are on deck, we are willing to sacrifice all that we can to see that the Diocese grows to maturity & whatever resources we are able to raise, borrow or are donated to the Diocese will be used judiciously to the glory of God. People will be able to see what has been done. We appreciate you coming. This has given great encouragement and given us new hope. You have left your home to be here and this has given great hope to the people here for we know that we are not alone'.

Conclusion.

We were deeply impressed by the vision, enthusiasm and dedication of Bishop Idris Ado Zubairu, as well as by his entrepreneurial success and professional competence. We therefore have sufficient confidence to continue our financial support with enthusiasm, reassured by his realism and his determination to endeavour to achieve self-sufficiency in the operation of the Clinic.

The track record of all he has achieved in the nine months since we first met him, soon after he had taken up his post, gives us good grounds for this confidence and we departed from Bari inspired and encouraged by the ways in which the Bishop has used the small resources available to him, multiplying them in ways beyond any expectation.

Appendix 2. **Individual testimonies.**

1. Mercy, a young woman aged 19 in Bauchi City.

'On Saturday morning after breakfast my Dad came inside to tell us that a COCIN (Christian church of Nigeria) church was on fire. Daddy went to the church and I stayed with my younger brother and sister at home. People knocked down the door and burst into our home, throwing everything onto the floor. We were in the kitchen with my 22-year old uncle. Some of them were shouting that the house belongs to Muslims and the Christians should go away. They said they would set the house on fire. They asked where my mother and father were; I said I didn't know. They beat my uncle, and cut his head. They said they would rape my sister and kill us. Then one of them said they had orders only to kill men. They set my uncle on fire. I had to watch my uncle burn. When the police came, they took us out of the house, but they would not rescue my uncle so I had to listen to his cries for help as he was burnt alive in the house. The police left him to die. We do not know what happened to his body.'

2. Abel, aged 38, a civil servant working for Bauchi State Government:

'On February 19th at about 2am women came running to the COCIN Church compound, saying there were fires all around. A week before, one of the mosques had been agitating the young men to burn churches, so we were keeping watch. Then about 6am we started hearing gunshots and saw houses burning and churches, so we pushed people outside the church into the church grounds. They had already burnt more houses and the pastor's home. They were now attacking COCIN Railway Church so we tried to get help. We couldn't do anything as they surrounded the compound and were trying to shoot us with guns and petrol bombs. 2 people were injured. The police did nothing. The officer in charge refused to take control and put the tear gas cannisters back into his car. The attackers were shouting 'Allah Akubar' and were wearing red bandanas.'

3. Martha Jane, aged 60.

'About 2am we heard shouting and saw fires around us. My husband and I fled with our two children. When we returned, there was nothing left of our home. Everything had been burnt so thoroughly that I couldn't see what had been burnt or what had been looted.

We are now staying in the Refugee camp. Fortunately, my family is well but frightened – and we have lost everything.'

4. Dina Zaman, a 60-year old woman.

'On Friday, Friday, February 19th was at home with the other children when the mosque closed. Local people came out shouting 'Allah Aruba', with stones. The oldest boy in the family, Philip, came inside saying 'Come out side, come out, the people are stoning. He shouted to us to be quick. The children ran faster than me, so I ran behind. The Muslims were already around them, bearing them with sticks. They attacked me, beating my head. I tried to protect my head so my arms were beaten (shows scars) and my back is still terribly bruised. I was so terrified I was urinating. Then because I was screaming, my son Philip came back towards me. They beat him and wounded his head. He ran to the church, crying for help, saying 'They are beating my Mum – she will die.' They took Philip and me to the hospital where we were treated with injections and dressing for our wounds. Then at 2.15 the next morning, when we were back home and asleep, someone banged on our door saying that homes were burning. We couldn't leave until the house next door was burning. The security men did nothing; no-one defended us; our car was stoned.

We were taken to the Barracks at Gudrum; we have been there for seven weeks until now, no-one from the Government has come to visit us; we have received no help whatever.'

5. In Jos North: Johnson Adebisi Akinjogbin a middle aged man

'I was in Abuja at the time. At home in Jos, I had left my wife and two of my 3 daughters. Also living with us were 3 young men, all doing National Service in the Police Force. Ever since the scheme was introduced in 1976 (?) there has rarely been a year when I did not have at least one of these young national servicemen staying in my home. It has always gone well and been peaceful.

I was intending to return home on Friday, November 28th when at 6 am daughter phoned me to say to 'hang on'. At 7.30 she phoned again to say that Muslims had burnt a church nearby and by 8 am she told us they were attacking our neighbours. At 0930 she phoned to say that they had broken into my wife's shop but they could not get into our house. My friend frantically phoned the security people whom he knew – but they said there was no help available: the roads were blocked and they couldn't get through. I kept on phoning and at 1015 a voice said;

'We have killed all the men in your house.'

I shouted down the phone 'Who are you?' He replied 'Police' in a strong Hausa accent and then the phone cut off.

I kept trying to phone but all efforts were abortive.

At 4pm my wife answered the phone. The phone had been found in the ruins of our house by a neighbour who gave it to my wife whom she found wandering about in the street.

Later I learnt what had happened: They broke the windows of my home, throwing in petrol bombs and shouting that my family would burn to death unless they came out. They had no choice so they opened the door.

The 3 young men were dragged to one side of the courtyard. One was my nephew; another, my wife's cousin and a third, their friend. They killed my nephew and his friend with a machete. But my wife's cousin had prayed to Jesus and they did not want to hear this, so they cut his throat.

One of my daughters was soaked in petrol ready to be burnt. They were going to rape my other daughter. But one of the attackers shouted that they had been commanded only to kill the men. So my wife and 2 daughters survived physically but my wife has never been the same since. She is Port Harcourt with my other daughter – but she has never recovered and is not the wife I married. I want my wife back again.

That afternoon, the police arrived. They refused to help to move the bodies. They left them lying there. My wife and daughters did not know if they were still alive. The police refused to give any help; they just said 'If you don't want to die, you had better get in this car now. She didn't know if any of the young men were still alive; she thinks one was still breathing; but they would not help him.

I don't know what to do. We have no home and my wife is too terrified to return to Jos and never wants to live in any part of the north again.

They stole 5 of our phones and they are still using them to threaten us. They say 'We still want to deal with you...there is nothing you can do..'

They say they also want to 'deal with' my wife as 'she was too stubborn.'

The names of the 3 young men who were killed:

The nephew: Ibukun Akinjogbin (who has a British passport)

His wife's cousin: Tola Odusole

Their friend: Leke Akande.

The names of the 2 daughters:

Tola, aged 28, who was soaked in petrol, ready for burning;

Toun, 24, whom they were dragging away in order to rape.

Mr Akinjogbin gave this message:

'We must solve the problems of Jos. There was violence in 2001; now, in 2008. There was no result from the 2001 enquiry.

Christians are going through traumas here. They are being persecuted. The Muslims are the first to strike, so they always have the upper hand. They go from city to city, killing Christians. The international community needs to know this. It needs to know the lies and the stories they tell. The lies they told about the Christian corpses they gathered.'

THIS IS A FIRST DRAFT REPORT. THE FINAL VERSION WILL BE AVAILABLE IN DUE COURSE.

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The University Church of Jos; Holy Trinity Anglican. Student Hostel is across the road where one student killed.

New Life Among the Ruins:
The Totally Demolished Youth Centre of a Church Burnt in Attack in February 2009. (Fortunately, all the people escaped alive here).



Determined to Stay:
Homes Destroyed in Jos North.