

Hundreds Killed in Muslim Attack On Christian Villages

Hundreds of Christians were killed last March when Muslim Fulani herdsmen went on a rampage through Christian villages in Jos, Nigeria, burning homes and killing women and children with machetes.

At least 500 people died in a March 7 attack, followed by 13 others in another assault two weeks later. "We were woken up by gunshots in the middle of the night, and before we knew what was happening, our houses were torched and they started hacking down people," survivor Musa Gyang told Nigerian media.

Plateau state is a predominantly Christian area in a nation divided almost evenly between Christians and Muslims. For years, the Muslim minority has been contesting ownership of some parts of the state, leading to frequent clashes. Because of the style of the killings, Christian leaders suspect Islamic extremists are encouraging the attacks.

More than 160 suspects had been arrested as of late March, and 41 faced murder charges. After the initial attacks, Gov. Jonah Jang of Plateau state, where Jos is the capital, called for three days of prayer and fasting to "cry out to God to forgive our sins and bring peace to Plateau [state]," Compass Direct News reported.

Members of Congress affiliated with the International Religious Freedom Caucus sent a letter in March urging the Nigerian government to do all it can to ensure the "rule of law and religious freedom."

