

Nigeria: Use Restraint in Curbing Jos Violence

Human Rights Watch

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Nigeria should **ensure that its security forces use restraint and comply with international standards on the use of force** in responding to the latest deadly outbreak of inter-communal violence in the city of Jos, Human Rights Watch said today. The government should also investigate and prosecute those responsible for the killing of at least 200 people during the violence, the latest of several deadly outbreaks in Nigeria, and address the underlying causes.

This latest violence comes just over a year after Christian and Muslim clashes and the excessive use of force by the security forces responding to the conflict left more than 700 dead in Jos, the capital of Plateau State in central Nigeria.

(...) According to credible reports from civil society leaders, and national and international media, the violence was carried out by sectarian mobs armed with guns, bows and arrows, and machetes. Roving gangs are reported to have burned and looted houses, cars, and shops, as well as several churches and mosques. There are also several credible reports that the military and police used excessive force in responding to the violence.

(...) The government should also take concrete steps to end the discriminatory policies that treat certain groups as second-class citizens and that lie at the root of much of the inter-communal violence in Nigeria. Government policies that [discriminate against "non-indigenes"](#) - people who cannot trace their ancestry to those said to be the original inhabitants of an area - underlie many of these conflicts. Non-indigenes are openly denied the right to compete for government jobs and academic scholarships. In Jos, members of the largely Muslim Hausa ethnic group are classified as non-indigenes though many have resided there for several generations.

(...)

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