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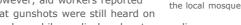
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Nigerian city tense after riots

At least 200 people have been killed in the Nigerian town of Jos after two days of violence, officials say.

A curfew has been imposed by police and army officers in the worst-hit neighbourhoods, and an army spokesman said the fighting was over.

However, aid workers reported that gunshots were still heard on



Sunday, while medical and water supplies were running low.

The violence was sparked by accusations that an election had been rigged.

Homes were destroyed during the clashes, with mosques and churches burned, as gangs of men from the Muslim Hausa community and the mainly Christian ethnic groups, armed with machetes fought.

The information minister for Plateau State, Nuhu Gagara, said about 200 people died.

"This figure is just preliminary, as a search and rescue committee has been inaugurated by the government to go around the city and recover dead bodies," Mr Gagara told reporters.

Police arrested 500 people on Saturday, carrying "all sorts of lethal weapons," he added.

The BBC's Alex Last in Lagos says the death toll may be far higher. There is no figure for the number of injured.

The local imam at the mosque where Muslims brought their dead said the number was in the hundreds.

At the Vatican, Roman Catholic Church leader Pope Benedict included Nigerian victims in his prayers on Sunday and urged the



Some of the Muslim dead were taken to

Buildings were burnt during the two

world to express "horror and disapproval" at the senseless violence.

Political power

Army spokesman Brig Emeka Onwamaegbu earlier told AFP news agency that there were no more violent incidents on Sunday, but Oxfam co-ordinator Francis Ayinzat told the BBC he heard gunshots before leaving the town for the capital, Abuja.

"There is a very severe shortage of medical supplies, and a lot of people are going without water," Mr Ayinzat said.

Violence flared up on Friday after the mostly Christian-backed governing party, the People's Democratic Party, was declared to have won the state elections in Plateau state, of which Jos is the capital city.

The result was contested by the opposition All Nigeria People's Party,

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which is perceived in the state as a predominantly Muslim party.

Jos has seen repeated bouts of inter-communal violence, with more than 1,000 killed during riots in 2001.

The real trigger for the violence is usually competition for resources, our correspondent says.

And in Nigeria political office is perhaps the most powerful resource of all as it gives the holder access to some of country's huge oil revenues.

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