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Nigeria religious clashes spread in Jos

Religious clashes have spread to a new area of the central Nigerian city of Jos, where fighting on Sunday reportedly killed at least 20 people.

Rival gangs of Christian and Muslim youths have put up roadblocks and gunfire is reported from the city.

A doctor told the BBC that more bodies had arrived in the mortuary, while a 24-hour curfew has been imposed.

The area has a history of ethnic and religious tension - at least 200 people were in 2008 and 1,000 in 2001.

Extra troops and police have been sent to the newly affected areas.

The Plateau State authorities have said that more than 60 arrests have been made but they have not said how many people have died since Sunday.



Houses, mosques and churches were set alight on Sunday.

At least 3,000 people have fled their homes, according to the Red Cross.

Plateau State spokesman Dan Manjang said it was not yet known what had sparked the unrest.

He told the BBC's Network Africa programme there were reports that it may have started after a football match - although he said that would be surprising.

Reuters news agency quotes residents as saying the violence started after an argument over the rebuilding of homes destroyed in the 2008 clashes.

Nigerian Red Cross official in Jos Awwal Madobi told the BBC that families had fled the violence.

"Some are in the church, some in the mosque and the NDLEA (Nigeria Drug Law Enforcement Agency)," he said.

"It's not that they are directly affected but they are scared and want to be somewhere secure for their safety."

He said they needed blankets and food as they had fled empty-handed.

Jos is in Nigeria's volatile Middle Belt - between the mainly Muslim north and the south where the majority is Christian or follows traditional religions.

Correspondents say such clashes in Nigeria are often blamed on sectarianism, however poverty and access to resources such as land often lies at the root of the violence.

"Some are in the church, some in the mosque... they are scared"

Red Cross official Awwal Madobi

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