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Nigeria riot city under control, says army chief

NIGERIA - TROUBLED GIANT

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appears to have spread to the town of Pankshin.

On Wednesday morning, one resident of Pankshin told our reporter by telephone the fighting began at 2230 (2130 GMT) on Tuesday.

He said the unrest had continued into Wednesday morning but no soldiers could be seen on the streets.

Another family told the BBC they had fled the town to neighbouring Bauchi State to escape the violence.

But Plateau State spokesman Dan Manjang dismissed the accounts from Pankshin as "rumours".

'Little faith'

The Red Cross, which was unable to get into Jos on Tuesday, said its workers had begun to treat the wounded.

Rights groups have expressed fears that people are running short of food because they are confined to their homes as part of the 24-hour curfew.

And at least 5,000 people have fled the violence and are using army barracks and public buildings as temporary accommodation.

The Jos-based League for Human Rights said people have little faith in the security forces to restore order.

The group's Shamaki Gad told the BBC that no-one had been prosecuted for participating in previous religious and ethnic clashes.

Correspondents say such clashes in Nigeria are often blamed on sectarianism.

However, poverty and access to resources such as land often lie at the root of the violence.

It is unclear what the trigger was for the latest bout of violence, but there have been reports it started after football match.

Other reports suggested it began after an argument over the rebuilding of homes destroyed in the 2008 clashes.

JOS, PLATEAU STATE

Nigeria map

Deadly riots in 2001 and 2008

City divided into Christian and Muslim areas

Divisions accentuated by system of classifying people as indigenes and settlers

Hausa-speaking Muslims living in Jos for decades are still classified as settlers

Settlers find it difficult to stand for election

Divisions also exist along party lines: Christians mostly back the ruling PDP; Muslims generally supporting the opposition ANPP

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