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Page last updated at 23:24 GMT, Monday, 25 January 2010

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Hundreds arrested after Nigeria clashes

More than 300 people suspected of being involved in last week's deadly religious clashes in central Nigeria have been arrested, police have said.

Troops have been ordered to remain at their posts to avoid the army being dragged into the conflict, AFP reports.

Although an exact death toll is not known, 300 or more are thought to have died in the Muslim-Christian clashes.

Scores of bodies have been found in wells near Jos, a city straddling the Christian south and Muslim north.

Of the 300 arrested, almost half have been taken from the central Plateau state to the capital, Abuja, for questioning.

Displaced people

Many of those arrested were previously taken into custody during similar violence in November 2008, a state government spokesman said according to Reuters.

"We are afraid the same situation will occur again. They were moved to Abuja last time, but they were never prosecuted," Plateau state government spokesperson Gregory Yenlong said.

Hundreds of police have been deployed on the streets of Jos to restore order and a curfew imposed on the city has been relaxed to run for 12 hours from 1800 each evening.

The head of Nigeria's armed forces said they had intelligence that some people were trying to infiltrate its ranks.

"We are aware of the fact that there is tension in the country," Lt Gen Abdulrahman Dambazau said, according to AFP.

"We want to ensure that we control the movement of troops to protect them against people who will try to take advantage of them."

The violence erupted in the city last week, rapidly spreading to nearby villages. Several thousand people remain displaced, having abandoned their homes, fleeing the mobs wielding knives and machetes.

A precise toll is not known though Muslim officials in Jos who spoke to



Around 300 people are believed to have died during the violent 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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