

# 500 buried in mass grave

RAYMOND GUKAS, Jos

THE sectarian violence that has engulfed the city of Jos, Plateau State, since last Thursday, worsened yesterday with the death toll hitting over 500, though the government said only 200 died.

Muslim community in the state said it has already lost 372 Muslims in the crisis that has rocked Jos North local

government area for some days now. The victims were buried in a mass grave yesterday.

Though the casualties from the Christian side were not known, the International Red Cross said over 10,000 refugees are presently camped in various locations within the metropolis and are in needs of relief materials.

The Chief of, Army Staff, Major General Abdulrahman

Danbazzau visited the displaced persons camp yesterday and assured them of relief materials when he was told that many were facing serious hunger.

A Red Cross official, Mr. Manasseh Panpe, said the organisation is now using the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, NDLEA, regional academy, Central Mosques, ECWA University of Jos, ECWA Laranto as refuge camps for the

displaced persons.

The National Emergency Management Agency, NEMA, he said had delivered relief materials including food stuff to the refugees, even as the NDLEA opened its medical centre for the medical needs of the displaced.

While speaking before the mass burial of the Muslim victims, the House of Representatives member,

deaths was caused by police bullets.

Speaking on behalf of the Chief Imam of the Central

*Continues on page 6*

## Killer-syrup: NAFDAC writes 36 governors

DIRECTOR-GENERAL of the National Agency for Foods and Drugs Administration and Control (NAFDAC), Professor Dora Akunyili at the weekend sought the support of state governors on the dreaded teething mixture, "My Pikin".

Akunyili in a statement made available to *Daily Champion* said: "We have written to all state governors, requesting them to help us to disseminate information on *My Pikin* teething mixture which is killing our children, in their local languages"

NAFDAC also said, "to forestall further casualties, an alert notice has been sent to all medicine outlets, stores, clinics in the country to immediately withdraw from circulation all batches of *My Pikin* teething mixture and surrender than

to the nearest NAFDAC office as failure to do so will attract server sanctions.

It would be recalled that last Thursday, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Tranxell Limited (names withheld) Ilesamaja, Lagos who allegedly sold the adulterated chemical (dietylenogly col) contained in the baby teething "My Pikin" paracetamol was arrested by officials of NAFDAC.

NAFDAC made the arrest even as it discovered that three more children had died on Wednesday in Kaduna as a result of the taking the syrup.

The Tranxell boss whose chemical shop was also sealed has been handed over to the police for further interrogation.

The dead toll of children who have so far died due to the "My

*Continues on page 6*

## Jonathan chides Iwu's critics

### •Defends 2007 elections

IHEANACHO NWOSU, JUDE OPARA and EMMA OGU, Owerri

VICE President Goodluck Jonathan, yesterday chided

the critics of the chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, Prof. Maurice Iwu, saying the criticisms were not justified, given the problems that INEC was faced with, prior to the elections.

He insisted that the 2007 general election was successful considering the prevailing condition under which the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) conducted the poll.

"It is easy for people to condemn the electoral body at

the centre but look at what is happening in the states where they have to conduct only Local Government Elections but here is an INEC that had to conduct elections in the 36 states of the federation and Abuja and we did not see the level of destructions that are being recorded in the states," he said.

The VP said most of the criticisms on the person of Iwu and his INEC were not justified going by the enormity of troubles the commission had to contend with while conducting

*Continues on page 6*



### COUNTRYMAN

WHERE IS CREDIBLE OPPOSITION IN NIGERIA? - CONCERNED CITIZEN



THEY'VE BEEN SILENCED WITH "CHOP-CHOP"

**•Continued from Page 1**

Mosque, he said it was evident that the victims died of gun shot wounds which he was very sure was from the police who were drafted to keep peace.

Also supervising the burial ceremony, Lt. Col. Mohammed Sa'id, who represented the Chief of Army Staff, said the army came to provide its little contributions by way of providing burial materials for the dead.

Most Christians failed to worship in their respective churches for fear of attacks, as the chaotic situation worsened yesterday, with government adding another two hours to the earlier 12 hours curfew in parts of the state.

Also, church activities, including marriages and social gatherings had to be suspended indefinitely as a result of the crisis.

The Christian Association of Nigeria, CAN, Plateau State chapter alleged that the crisis was religious and not political as some people are indicating. The government equally stressed that mercenaries were brought into the state from nearby states by unknown persons.

Meanwhile, opposition leader and ADC Presidential candidate in the 2007 Presidential elections, Prof Pat Utomi has condemned the outbreak of violence in Plateau State following the local government elections held there on Thursday. He called on authorities to denounce such conduct and

## Jos massacre

ensure that instigators of this mass loss of Nigerian lives are censured.

"It is with great shock that I have learnt of yet another tragic turn into violent in response to perception of what may or not may be appropriate outcomes from political matters with this new wave of arson and murder in Plateau State."

"Whatever at all may be the reasons, the taking of human lives is unacceptable and condemnable just as is the deliberate destruction of property."

"As we have said again and again, our nation cannot make progress until the dignity of the human person and the inestimable value of every soul is placed above any material consideration or power consideration."

"Part of the crisis of development of our country is this failure of culture in which the dignity of man is inalienable and uncontestable."

"I am calling on all authorities at all levels to visit with a maximum show of disagreement for such conduct, all who may be implicated in any shape or form in plotting and executing the loss of the lives of Nigerians."

Also *Afenifere* Renewal Group (ARG) condemned the violence, saying it was sparked off by the usual Peoples Democratic Party, (PDP) game

of manipulating the electoral process with impunity, which has characterized their mantra of 'do-or-die' politics.

"The Jos response is just a tip of the iceberg of what we have always warned could happen when you push a people to the wall. It takes just a spark to ignite an unquenchable fire of angst bottled-up over a period of time. And, in a society where there are other welled-up social tensions, a conflagration is just a heartbeat away.

"It is unfortunate that what we have heard from the presidency, which, itself is also hanging on a dubious mandate is a tepid response to the violence in Jos without the moral authority to address the electoral manipulation that has given rise to this wanton loss of lives and property.

"It is an indictment of the Nigerian political leadership that, while neighbouring Ghana is matching on peacefully towards its December 7, 2008, presidential elections, Nigeria is being exposed as a headache to the world over council polls.

"ARG sues for calm in Plateau State as the wanton destruction of lives and property affects mainly the ordinary people who are victims of a manipulative, indecent and avaricious political class."