

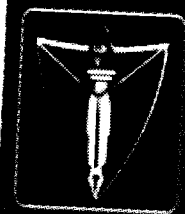
Keshi: no deal on Ameobi, Shittu

•Eagles coach warns English clubs

Petrol shortage mars 'Xmas in Lagos, Abuja

•NNPC blames Ijeododo pipeline fire

NEWS
Page 58



THE NATION

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TRUTH IN DEFENCE OF FREEDOM

N150.00

Hospitalised Mandela in high spirits, says Zuma

FORMER South African President Nelson Mandela is in good spirits and doctors are happy with his progress, President Jacob Zuma said after visiting him in hospital.

Mr Zuma said in a statement that Mr Mandela, 94,

was happy to have visitors on Christmas Day.

He was admitted to hospital in the South African capital, Pretoria, two weeks ago and has been treated for a lung infection and gallstones.

Mr Mandela spent 27 years in jail for fighting against

the apartheid regime.

He served as South Africa's first black president from 1994 to 1999 and is regarded by many as the father of the nation.

His health has been a cause of concern for many years.

He first contracted tuberculosis in the 1980s while de-

tained in Robben Island prison.

He has been admitted to hospital on three occasions in the past two years.

Mr Zuma said: "We found him in good spirits. He shouted my clan name, Nxamalala, as I walked into the

Continued on page 2

BUY

THE NATION

AND WIN A BRAND NEW CAR

SEE PAGE 63 FOR DETAILS

Gunmen kill 12 in 'Xmas Eve attacks on churches

■It's bestial, says Oritsejafor ■Pope laments 'savage acts of terrorism' in Nigeria

TWELVE people, including a pastor and a deacon, were killed in attacks by gunmen on churches on Christmas Eve in Yobe and Borno states.

Gunmen also attacked a local government official in Kano yesterday. He escaped with some injuries but his driver died.

The attack on the Yobe church during a Christmas

From Kolade Adeyemi, Kano and Duku Joel, Damaturu

Eve service, led to the killing of the pastor and five worshippers. The church was also set on fire.

Worshippers were attacked at the First Baptist Church in Maiduguri, the Borno State capital. A deacon and five church members were killed. The incidents dented the

massive security cordon woven around the country to prevent killings during the celebration. Besides, it brought back the sad memory of the Christmas Day bombings in Madala, Niger State, last year, in which many died.

Pope Benedict XVI decried attacks on churches in Nigeria in his homily at the St. Peter's Basilica, the Vatican, yesterday.

"A group of gunmen came into the village at midnight and went straight to the church... they opened fire on them, killing the pastor and five worshippers. They then set fire to the church," said Usman Mansir, resident of Firi village, near Potiskum, the economic capital of Yobe State.

Police spokesman in Yobe Adamu Salihu, yesterday

confirmed the attack on Firi Village.

He told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) that unknown gunmen had attacked the village early Tuesday.

He said there was no bomb explosion but gun attack with some casualties.

"We have received report on the attack but there are no details yet.

"There may be casualties but

no accurate figure yet; we are still awaiting the details from our men in Potiskum Division," he said.

There were reports that the COCIN Church in the village was also burnt down by the assailants, but this could not be confirmed.

Spokesman of the The Joint Task Force in Yobe Lt. Lazarus Eli said: "Five per-

Continued on page 2

Jonathan gets wake-up call on terrorism, kidnapping

•Why govt is slow, by President

From Vincent Ikuomola, Abuja

PRESIDENT Goodluck Jonathan was yesterday admonished to banish the twin menace of terrorism and kidnapping next year.

The Primate of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), Archbishop Nicholas Oko, urged the government to find a permanent solution to terrorism and kidnapping.

He spoke at the Christmas Day Service at the Cathedral Church of the Advent, Life Camp in Abuja.

President Jonathan, First Lady Dame Patience and members of the first family attended the service.

Terrorism is rampant in the North where Boko Haram (western education is a sin), has been killing people. Kidnappers are on the rampage in the South, especially in the South-south and the Southeast.

The rights group, Campaign for Democracy (Southeast), alleged that kidnappers make

Continued on page 2



•LET THE MUSIC PLAY: Members of the Cathedral of St. Michael Church choir during the Christmas Service in Kaduna...yesterday

PHOTO: NAN

•LIFE P25 •SPORT P23 •MONEY P30 •INVESTORS P32 •POLITICS P43

him.
"They have become used to spending big money and if from one kidnapping he gets

does not encourage tit for tat for the frequent killings because Christians are peace

continue to come down to the poor because God is interested in the affairs of the poor". Prayers were said for the first

back. And where we need to

Continued on page 63

•Mandela

in 2004 and has been rarely seen in public since.

Gunmen kill 12 in 'Xmas Eve attacks on churches

It is a bestial act, says Oritsejafor

Continued from page 1

sons lost their lives and four others sustained injuries during the attack. One suspect was arrested in connection with the attack".

Damaturu the state capital remained calm without any tension.

Normal church services were held in the metropolis with intensive security check carried out on cars and worshippers.

Most of the clergy men at their Christmas sermons preached the love and joy of the birth of Christ to come upon the country.

Rev. Fr. Allen of the St. Mary's Catholic Church Damaturu prayed for peace to return to the country.

He urged Nigerians to forgive one another and allow the love of Christ to envelop the nation.

In Kano, some gunmen yesterday injured the Dawakin Tofa Local Government Council Interim management

CHRISTIAN Association of Nigeria (CAN) President Pastor Ayo Oritsejafor yesterday described the Christmas Eve killings as a bestial act against a people exercising their right to worship.

He said: "It is highly disturbing and very barbaric. It is archaic. It is totally against God and anything that has to do with Him. You wonder how people will go through this extent in the name of God.

"Let us not continue to deny that there are jihadists, extremists and Islamists in this country. They are here. Let us agree that it is time for us to take certain steps to bring this madness to an end."

He urged the worshippers in the area not to succumb to evil perpetrators by absconding their ancestral homes, stressing that doing so would smack of

From Gbenga Omokhunu, Abuja

cowardice.

Pastor Oritsejafor explained that even though he was not cut out to disparage adherents of other faiths, the truth must be told.

He added: "Let me again say that I have high respect and regard for my Muslim friends and brothers. I'm not against Muslims. We need their help. We have been saying it and we will continue to say it. Not only do we appeal to them to condemn it, we are asking that they must help us take this message to the grass-roots.

"We (Christians) are not their enemies. The clerics that preach in the mosques, they should help us spread this news. With this goodwill, they will be able to flush out those people from among them. When An American ambassador was killed, the ordinary Muslim got angry. This is too much. Americans knew these people and they went and flushed them out of their camps.

officer, Alhaji Ahmed Kambai Ismaila. They killed his driver.

The incident, according to eyewitnesses, happened at

about 9:30 am at Sallari quarters of Kano city. It was gathered that the gunmen, who trailed Ismaila, opened fire on him when they got close to his

vehicle. The bullet missed the target but hit the driver, who died instantly.

Kano police spokesman Majia Magaji said the area has

Oritsejafor also noted that it was not enough for the Northern leaders to condemn an act of violence whenever it occurred; they must do something about it.

"These people are not really helping them. They are destroying their economy. When things like this happen, many (northern leaders) come out to condemn these acts. Condemning it as it is now is not enough. They must go a step further. They must condemn these acts. Nigeria belongs to all of us and we must join hands to make this nation what it is supposed to be.

"Nobody is against them. Their minds must be disabused not to believe that these extremists and jihadists are fighting for them. We need these leaders to save us. If they were in Warri, we will know how to flush them out. The northern leaders can do more," he said.

The CAN President spoke in a telephone interview.

been condoned off as investigation continues.

The Pope lamented "savage acts of terrorism" that frequently target Christian

churches in Nigeria during his traditional Christmas message.

The pontiff prayed for "concord in Nigeria, where savage acts of terrorism continue to reap victims, particularly among Christians".

The Islamist extremist group Boko Haram (western education is a sin) has often targeted churches in its bloody insurgency, as well as police and other symbols of the establishment.

Violence linked to the insurgency is believed to have left about 3 000 people dead since

Continued on page 63

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