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THIS DAY

Nigeria: Tension Mounts Again in Jos

Seriki Adinoyi

13 February 2009

Jos — Palpable tension is again building up within Jos/Bukuru metropolis in Plateau state, following rumour of a fresh attack that might be unleashed on residents.

It is also alleged that bodies of two young men murdered by unknown persons were found around Congo-Russia area of the city, during the early hours of Thursday morning.

But the Plateau Police Command has described the rumour as baseless. The Command's Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), ASP Mohammed Lerema, dispelled the rumour in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) yesterday.

This is coming as the Speaker of the Plateau State House of Assembly, Honourable Istifanus Caleb Mwansat, charged the Ad-hoc Committee set up by the Assembly to investigate the recent Jos crisis to discharge its duty dispassionately.

Mwansat appealed to members of the public to co-operate with the committee in whatever presentation that would be made to help in finding lasting solution to the unrest.

The tension is even more heightened by an undated letter signed by one Idris Ibn Mohammed on behalf of "Joint Islamic Committee (JIC)" calling for a total Jihad against the government of the state because of the unfulfilled promises it made to the Jasawa Association during the past administrations.

Though the Director of Press and Public Affairs (DOPA) to Governor Jonah Jang, Mr. James Mannok, confirmed the rumour, he added that the State Police Commissioner had assured citizens that his men were on ground to crack down on hoodlums.

A visit to Congo-Russia area of the city by our correspondent indicated that there was an unusual heavy presence of security personnel beefed up around hot spots, while the check points mounted during the November crisis were even further fortified.

Meanwhile, the new General Officer Commanding (GOC), 3rd Armoured Brigade of the Nigerian Army, Major General Sale Maina, has taken a tour of military checkpoints mounted around the city to ensure that they were prepared for any crisis.

According to the undated letter which is being circulated round the city, previous administrations in the state had promised "Jasawa" the creation of chiefdom for the Hausa/Fulani community within Jos, and had also promised to install an Emir for the community, and to create a local government area out for the present Jos-North for the Hausas, with its headquarters in Angwan-Rogo, among other, but they failed. This promises according to Mohammed, were to compensate the Hausa/Fulani for their contribution to the economic development of the state, even though they were still being marginalised. The letter, which was despatched to "prominent Islamic leaders", is meant to remind them "why we must continue the Jihad in Plateau State". When THISDAY visited the University of Jos, students were seen drifting out of the campus in large number for fear of a repeat of the November incidence.

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