



AFRICA/NIGERIA - "The spread of false information increases the violence," Archbishop of Jos tells Fides

Jos (Agenzia Fides) - "The spread of false information incites the people and increases the violence. There should be attention placed so as not to spread news that has not been verified," Agenzia Fides was told by Archbishop Ignatius Ayau Kaigama of Jos, the capital of Plateau State (central Nigeria), where in recent days there have been serious clashes that have claimed hundreds of lives. "The situation has returned to calm. Police and army are patrolling the streets of the city and have imposed a curfew. I cannot give figures on the number of victims, how many houses, churches, or mosques have been burned, in part because of the curfew that does not allow me to move about freely. I fear that both Christians and Muslims will inflate figures regarding their victims. The authorities should be impartial and honest in presenting data on casualties and damage to structures," says the Archbishop of Jos.

Archbishop Kaigama clarifies the Fides news report from yesterday (see Fides 20/1/2010): "It was affirmed that the spark that had caused the violence was from an attack and fire started at a Catholic Church. This has not happened. It is true that a Protestant church was burned. From what I have so far managed to find out, several churches have been burned, but most are not Catholic. I repeat: there are too many rumors, including one on the destruction of the Cathedral, which is absolutely not true."

To calm the people, yesterday (January 20) several Christian leaders (including Archbishop Kaigama) and Muslim leaders held a meeting. "Next Monday (January 25), the Islamic-Christian Joint Committee will meet to assess the situation and take measures to avoid similar incidents from happening again," concluded Bishop Kaigama. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 21/1/2010)