

# Generation of Architectural and Other Safety Measures Against Crises and Killings at Residential Environments in Plateau State of Nigeria

Odaudu Ugbede Sunday <sup>1</sup>, Isah Suleiman <sup>2</sup> and Abdullahi Aminu Lawan <sup>3</sup>

1. Department of Architecture, Bingham University, Kilometre 26 Abuja, Keffi Expressway, Karu, Nasarawa State of Nigeria.

2. Department of Biochemistry, Federal Polytechnic, Idah, Kogi State of Nigeria.

3. Department of Architecture, Aliko Dangote University of Science and Technology, Wudil, Kano State of Nigeria.

ORCID ID of the Corresponding and 3rd Authors: 0000-0002-4281-5123 and 0000-0001-6911-0230.

doi: <https://doi.org/10.37745/bjes.2013/vol12n12133>

Published February 19, 2024

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**Citation:** Odaudu U.S., Isah S. and Abdullahi A.L. (2024) Generation of Architectural and Other Safety Measures Against Crises and Killings at Residential Environments in Plateau State of Nigeria, British Journal of Environmental Sciences 12(1), 21-33

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**ABSTRACT:** *Over the years there have been series of crisis in Plateau State of Nigeria and they have led to massive killings and destruction of valuable properties; this is a very serious problem. Hence, it became necessary to conduct a research work with the aim of overviewing the cases of crises and killings at residential environments in Plateau State, in order to generate architectural and other safety measures to reduce their future occurrences in Nigeria. The research focused on desktop study as the instrument for data collection; reviewed different newspapers in Nigeria with available crisis and killing cases in Plateau State, in order to get relevant information to the research. Thus, table was used for the presentation and analysis of the research data, so as to generate results and the results were checked by using contents analysis technique, in order to validate them. Among the architectural research findings is: 1,290 houses were burnt during December, 2023 crisis in Bokokos Local Government Area of Plateau State and some other research findings are: the security agencies knew that an attack was coming before the 2023 Christmas eve massacre; the security forces know the attackers, and they even know their hideouts for two decades. Among the recommended architectural safety measures to reduce future crises and killings is: the design of the members of roof, door, window, ceiling and any other part of building that can easily burn with the use of wood should be fire retardant type, in order to reduce death, massive destruction of houses and valuable properties in times of fire attack from the terrorists. Some other recommended safety measures are: there should be advanced training of security agencies on immediate defensive responses against the terrorists been rumored of their coming to the state; urgent investigations must be made on the security forces that knew the attackers and their hideouts for two decades without revealing the information, so that the defaulted members of those security forces can receive a very severe/appropriate punishment, in order to stop this kind of bad service in Nigeria.*

**KEYWORDS:** Crises and Killings, Nigeria, Plateau State, Residential Environments, Safety Measures.

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## INTRODUCTION

Crises are events or periods that will lead to an unstable and dangerous situation affecting an individual, a group or all the society; crises are negative changes in the human or environmental affairs, especially when they occur abruptly with little or no warning (Encyclopedia, 2023a; Rob, Alain, Lucia and Jonas, 2022). Crises are often linked to the concept of psychological stress and used to suggest a frightening or fraught experience. In general, Dwarika (2006) and Encyclopedia (2023a) stated that crises are the situation of a complex system when the system functions poorly (the system still functions, but does not break down); an immediate decision is necessary to stop the further disintegration of the system but the causes of the dysfunction are not immediately identified (the causes are so many or unknown that it is impossible to take a rational, informed decision to reverse the situation).

According to Andreas (2023), crises are fundamentally associated with unpredictability, uncontrollability and uncertainty but also with openness to new things. They represent as in the case of illness, a crossroad that can lead to either a negative or positive outcome. Crises can be a temporary phenomenon or can fundamentally challenge given practices and institutions. If crises persist over a longer period of time, a loss of trust in the existing rules and norms usually takes place. Each crisis can be regarded as a danger or as a valuable opportunity for inner transformation and renewal. Crises can sharpen the awareness and willingness to develop new ideas and solutions. People have the choice of whether to face crises with fear and concern or with hope and a willingness to form and build a new. Fears and concerns can shake people up; also paralyse them and trigger false reactions. Through hope people can look constructively into the future and enable something positive to arise out of the crisis. Though, crises are testing times for emergencies and they can lead to killings in some cases (Ezeikpe, 2018; International Rescue Committee, 2022).

Killings in this context are refer to as murders which are unlawful killing of human beings without justification or valid excuse (Encyclopedia, 2023b; Mohammad and Saida, 2018). Murders are part of the most serious crimes that can be committed against individuals. They are willful killing of people with malice aforethought, whether the people slain shall be Englishmen or a foreigner (Ashworth, 2006). They can be crime of deliberately causing the death of someone. Murders can be caused by poor education of youths, poor parenting, weak judicial system, economic hardship and effect of television and internet; effects of murder can be pains and sufferings, inconveniences, psychological traumas, worries and loss of sleep and slow economic development (Meher, 2018; StopLearn Team, 2024). Over the years there have been series of crisis in Plateau State of Nigeria and they have led to massive killings (Geneva, 2011; Plateau Peace Building Agency, 2021) and destruction of valuable properties cannot be excluded in the processes; this is a very serious problem in Nigeria.

To tackle this problem, this research paper is therefore aimed at overviewing the cases of crises and killings at residential environments in Plateau State, in order to generate architectural and other safety measures to reduce their future occurrences in Nigeria. The study area covers all the local governments with previous cases of crises and killings in Plateau State. According to Plateau State Information,

Communication and Technology (ICT) Development Agency (2021), Plateau State is the twelfth largest state in Nigeria and it is almost located in the centre of the country. It is geographically unique in Nigeria because its boundaries totally surround the Jos Plateau, having the Jos Plateau totally in its central and northern part. The capital of Plateau State is Jos. Right from the beginning, Plateau State has been celebrated as the home of peace and tourism. Plateau State gets its name from the Jos Plateau. It has a population of around 3.5 million people. Figures 1 and 2 shows map of Nigeria showing Plateau State and map of Plateau State respectively.



Nigeria showing Plateau State [Source: Research Gate, 2019 ([https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Map-of-Nigeria-showing-Plateau-State\\_fig1\\_332275937](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Map-of-Nigeria-showing-Plateau-State_fig1_332275937)); Retrieved on 20-01-2024].



Plateau State of Nigeria [Source: Research Gate, 2022 ([https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Map-of-Plateau-State-showing-the-study-area-Keys-Shows-the-study-area-Source-Jotscroll\\_fig1\\_343775328](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Map-of-Plateau-State-showing-the-study-area-Keys-Shows-the-study-area-Source-Jotscroll_fig1_343775328)); Retrieved on 20-01-2024].

## METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This research adopted descriptive survey method and generated qualitative data. According to National Population Commission (2022) and Nigeria High Commission (2022), Nigeria is made up of 36 states and the federal capital territory. Plateau State of Nigeria was selected as the study area by using purposive sampling method because of the massive killings in the state. The research focused on desktop study as the instrument for data collection; reviewed several literatures in and outside Nigeria and different newspapers in Nigeria with available crises and killing cases in Plateau State, in order to get relevant information to the research. Media (newspapers) were considered as the main sources of data. However, other information relevant to this study were drawn from books, journal articles, research blogs, reports, thesis, note, website and Wikipediae. Table was employed for the presentation and analysis of the research data obtained from all the newspapers so as to generate results and the results were checked via the application of contents analysis technique by comparing the raw newspaper information with their

extracted data, in order to validate the results. The results of the analysis were used to draw out vital safety measures to reduce future occurrences of crises and killings in the study area.

## DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSIONS

Research data were gathered from the reports of different media (online newspapers) which are Leadership Media Group, TheCable News and Views Unlimited and Vanguard Media Limited Nigeria. Table 1 shows the distribution of different media that were employed and the nature of data generated from them. It shows that out of three newspapers that were employed, two of them generated both architectural and other data, while only one generated other data.

**Table 1: Distribution of Different Media and Nature of the Generated Data.**

S/N	Media (Online Newspapers)	Nature of Data Generated
1	Leadership Media Group	Architectural and other Data
2	TheCable News and Views Unlimited	Other Data
3	Vanguard Media Limited Nigeria	Architectural and other Data

Source: Reviewed Work, 2024.

### Reports from Leadership Media Group

There was massacre of nearly 200 inhabitants of Plateau State of Nigeria during 2023 Christmas in well-coordinated attacks that spanned three days in three local government areas namely, Barkin Ladi, Mangu and Bokkos (Leadership, 2023). This is not the first time Christmas joy turned into grief in Plateau State. On Christmas Eve of 2010, the bombing of two communities by terrorists sparked reprisal killings that lasted well into January 2011 and led to the death of 2,000 people, including travelers passing the area.

According Leadership (2023), Plateau State had the reputation of one of the most peaceful states in Nigeria where everyone felt at home including foreigners who found the cold climate conducive for habitation. However, all that changed on 7th September, 2001 when violence broke out and spread through Jos (the state capital), during which an estimated 1,000 people were killed and thousands of others maimed; tens of thousands displaced and properties worth billions of Naira were destroyed in two weeks of clashes. The 2001 Jos riots were triggered by ethno-religious tensions that had simmered for a while but were left unattended. Since then, there have been cycles of violence with different triggers: politics, religious differences, farmer-herder conflict, banditry and terrorism. Leadership (2023) further showed that it is encouraging that eight suspects in the attack have been arrested.

### Reports from TheCable News and Views Unlimited

From TheCable (2021), the scale of conflict in Plateau State since 1999/2000 represents the most extreme triumph of ethnic tension, religious fundamentalism and sentimentalism. The past conflict in Plateau State links to three main reasons. The first is agricultural land; the second is the attempt to establish political

authority by those referred to as settlers and the resistance by indigenous population; the third reason is religion and particularly the conflict between Hausa-Fulani Muslim Jihadist and Christian militancy. TheCable (2021) further reviewed that some people saw the creation of Jos North Local Government by the Babangida regime as a ploy to cede the commercial capital to the Hausa/Fulani Settlers, a perception that exists to date and remains strong. Such passions fueled the outbreak of violence in 2001, which found fertile ground in the mind of people and led to the crises that have remain to date. Along the line, criminality took over and people began to attack their perceived enemies and create segregated communities. Each side of the divide raised its own militia to defend their people and interest. This interregnum compounded with the current herdsmen and bandit challenge rampaging various parts of the Nigeria. This challenge was evident in Bassa, Riyom, Jos North, Barkin Ladi and other places of Plateau State.

According to TheCable (2021), the real identities of the attackers and sponsors remains unknown despite the plethora of security agencies. On both sides of the divide, the issue is centered around agricultural land, and this explains why the situation is elevated during farming season. The consequence is that as violence recurs, spatial divisions and crimination highlight social and political divisions; people become more conscious of their subnational solidarity and allegiances and are more forthcoming about expressing them. There have been failures in the past in tackling this mayhem. The state government has failed to be firm on criminals and ensure punishment on the guilty. This lack of law enforcement led to growing impunity and resort to self-help. There have been poor security architecture and human resources to respond the attacks and a lack of political will to implement various judicial Panels of enquiry reports. There is a gross inability to rein hate preachers and other ethnic bigots spreading hatred in a community with pervasive poverty, drug abuse and religious bigotry. Many locals have accused the federal government in charge of security agencies of failing to secure the lives and properties of the people. Some accuse the security agents of complicity of the conflict.

From TheCable (2021), the unending crises in Jos North Local Government Authority and Plateau State in general is an offshoot of the problem of principle of the indigene/settlers. This archaic concept which has largely disappeared in many modern societies, means that some indigenous groups control power and resources in particular. Ethnic champions and religious extremists have stolen the limelight and are current in control of the conversation.

### **Reports from Vanguard Media Limited, Nigeria**

According to Vanguard (2023a), the Management Committee Chairman of Bokkos Local Government Area (LGA) of Plateau State said 148 people were killed in the 2023 Christmas Eve attack in the council; this came as the death toll in the massacre in three local government areas of the state rose to 195. Of the number, 148 were killed in Bokkos LGA, 19 in Mangu Local Government Area and 27 in Barkin Ladi. 1,290 houses were burnt down in Bokkos council, one house was razed in Mangu LGA and that of Barkin Ladi was yet to be ascertained at press time. Plate I shows burnt houses during December (Christmas), 2023 Plateau State crisis.



Burnt Houses during December (Christmas), 2023 Plateau State Crisis [Source: Leadership Media Group, 2023 (<https://leadership.ng/still-on-plateau-violence/>); Retrieved on 22/01/2024].

Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) described as heart-rending, the chilling reports of how defenseless Nigerians were gruesomely murdered and over 10,000 displaced by terrorists in Bokokos and Barkin Ladi areas of Plateau State in unrestrained attacks which lasted till Monday (following) morning (Vanguard, 2023a). Plate II shows the dead body in the hands of people owing to 2023 Plateau State crisis.



Dead Body in the Hands of People owing to 2023 Plateau State Crisis [Source: Vanguard, 2023 (<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2023/12/plateau-death-toll-hits-195-hundreds-of-houses-razed/>); Retrieved on 21-01-2024].

From Vanguard (2023b), about 25 Plateau communities suffered coordinated attacks by gunmen who killed not less than 195 people, injured more than 3,000 people, displaced 10,000 people and razed 1,290 houses. Vanguard (2023b) further revealed that Stanley Kavwam (Deputy National Publicity Secretary of the Middle Belt Forum) gathered that most of the communities attacked in Plateau State in 2023 are Christian settlements, adding that the operation usually lasted for about 24 hours without security intervention. Kavwam said security agencies knew that an attack was coming before the Christmas eve massacre. His words: “They received about 37 distress calls, that is operation Safe Haven or the Joint Task Force. About 37 distress calls! Yet nothing was done”. All the casualties are in a community inhabited by Christians and the security forces knew the attackers; they even knew their hideouts for two decades. These attacks are orchestrated from this autonomous community. Section 14B of the 1999 Constitution as amended stipulates that the welfare and security of the people shall be the primary purpose of government. These attacks could last for as long as 12 to 24 hours and there is no security presence whatsoever.

From Vanguard (2023b), it was further reviewed that a Plateau socio-cultural group, Bokkos Local Government Like-minds Association condemned what it described as “the despicable attacks that the herdsmen group continues to commit in various parts of Bokkos Local Government Area and some parts of Mangu and Barkin Ladi local government areas, which resulted in loss of lives, injury, and properties burnt and looted and many others displaced from their ancestral homes on 23rd December, 2023”. It was further revealed that when Jos was turned into an infernal theatre and a killing field in which 1,000 people



lost their lives in 2001, many thought that the violent expressions of differences had reached the zenith but unfortunately, more attacks followed in Jos, Wase, Langtang North, Langtang South, Shendam, Mikang, Qua'an Pan, Barkin Ladi and Riyom, resulting in many deaths and the destruction of properties. The cowardly killing of peaceful villagers in Barkin-Ladi and Boko, some in their sleep on Christmas day shows there is no limit to the barbarism of some people who live in Plateau State.

Vanguard (2023b) further stated that episodes of mass killing and destruction occurred in Jos in 2001, 2002, 2008 and 2010. The violence has also affected other parts of the state, especially in rural areas outside of Jos when hundreds of people were killed in villages, in their fields or while tending cattle. The situation has defied several measures by past administrations to halt the trend. Many have blamed the crisis on many factors including disagreement over indigene ship, Jos ownership, politics, ignorance, religion, unemployment and sheer wickedness.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The research considered the issues of crises: events or periods that will lead to an unstable and dangerous situation affecting individuals, groups or societies; it also considered the killing of humans and destruction of properties as their consequences. Hence, the aim of the research was to overview the cases of crises and killings at residential environments in Plateau State of Nigeria, in order to generate architectural and other safety measures to reduce their future occurrences. The architectural research findings showed that: 1,290 houses were burnt during December, 2023 crisis in Bokkos Local Government Area of Plateau State; most of the communities attacked in Plateau State in 2023 crisis are Christian settlements and the operation usually lasted for about 24 hours without security intervention; the state has once experienced the displacement of tens of thousands of people from their ancestral homes and destruction of properties worth billions of Naira in two weeks of clashes in 2001.

Other research findings are as follows: about 200 inhabitants of Plateau State of Nigeria were killed during 2023 Christmas in well-coordinated attacks that spanned three days in three local government areas; on Christmas Eve of 2010, the bombing of two communities by terrorists sparked reprisal killings that lasted well into January 2011 and led to the death of 2,000 people, including travelers passing the area; eight suspects in the 2021 attack in Plateau State were arrested but in some attacks, the real identities of the attackers and sponsors remains unknown despite the plethora of security agencies; there have been poor security architecture and human resources to respond to the attacks and a lack of political will to implement various judicial panels of enquiry reports; security agencies knew that an attack was coming before the 2023 Christmas eve massacre; the security forces know the attackers, and they even know their hideouts for two decades.

Other research findings also indicated that the causes of Plateau State crises are the attempt to establish political authority by those referred to as settlers and the resistance by indigenous population; religious differences and particularly the conflict between Hausa-Fulani Muslim Jihadist and Christian militancy; farmer-herder conflict / agricultural land issues and this explains why the situation is elevated during farming season; banditry and terrorism; a gross inability to rein hate preachers and other ethnic bigots

spreading hatred in the community. In addition, some people in Plateau State saw that the creation of Jos North Local Government by the Babangida regime as a ploy to cede the commercial capital to the Hausa/Fulani settlers, a perception that exists to date and remains strong and such passions fueled the outbreak of violence in 2001 which found fertile ground in the mind of people and led to the crises that have remain to date. Having considered the findings of this research, the following architectural and other safety measures are therefore recommended to reduce the occurrence of crises and killings at residential environments in Plateau State of Nigeria.

### **Architectural Safety Measures to Reduce the Occurrence of Crises and Killings at Residential Environments in Plateau State of Nigeria**

- i. Architectural design of the members of roof, door, window, ceiling and any other part of building that can easily burn with the use of wood should be fire retardant type, in order to reduce death, massive destruction of houses and valuable properties in times of fire attack from the terrorists.
- ii. All residential buildings must have a strong room like that of bank vault and the strong room should have perforations of 0.45 metre high at the top very close to the ceiling level and having 0.3 metre distance between the top of the perforations and bottom of the ceiling, so that victims can hide themselves in that room and call the attention of security personnel via phones in case of terrorist attacks, since crises in Plateau State usually last for a long period of time.
- iii. There should be architectural design of mini military or paramilitary duty posts in all the settlements of previous attacks and their intervals should be determined by Town Planners, so as to quickly control future crises that may arise again, since crises usually last for many hours without any security intervention.
- iv. Emphasis should be given to Christian settlements regarding the location of the mini military or paramilitary duty posts, since most of the communities attacked in 2023 Plateau State crisis are in those settlements.
- v. There should be architectural design of Army Barrack in major settlements of the previous attacks to serve as places of refuge for thousands of people and to also improve the security of the areas, since the state has once experienced the displacement of tens of thousands of people from their ancestral homes in two weeks of clashes in 2001.

### **Other Safety Measures to Reduce the Occurrence of Crises and Killings at Residential Environments in Plateau State of Nigeria**

- i. There is a very serious need for Plateau State government and the federal government of Nigeria to improve on security in the state, in order to reduce massive killing of inhabitants of the state owing to well-coordinated attacks that spanned for days in different local government areas.
- ii. There is also a very serious need for Plateau State government and the federal government of Nigeria to improve on security architecture on the state roads, especially with regards to more advanced bomb detectors, since travelers passing the area of crisis were killed in two different communities (residential places) of the state on Christmas Eve of 2010.
- iii. Likewise, there should be a very serious improvement on investigations by the security agencies regarding the sponsors of the suspected terrorists and the supply of their arms when suspects are

- arrested, so that further arrest of their sponsors can be made with emphasis on blocking the way of the supply of their arms.
- iv. All the previous judicial panels of enquiry reports on security in the state must be brought back to the table for the generation of appropriate recommendations to improve security architecture, since there has been poor security architecture in the state.
  - v. There should be advanced training of security agencies on immediate defensive responses against the terrorists been rumored of their coming to the state, since the security agencies knew that a terrorists' attack was coming before the 2023 Christmas eve massacre and they could not stop it.
  - vi. Urgent investigations must be made on the security forces that knew the attackers and their hideouts for two decades without revealing the information, so that the defaulted members of those security forces can receive a very severe/appropriate punishment, in order to stop this kind of bad service in Nigeria.
  - vii. There is a very serious need for the government of Nigeria to organise seminar on political authority that will educate those referred to as settlers, and the indigenous population in the state, so as to reduce crises resulting from the attempt to establish political authority in the state.
  - viii. Peace building measures among Christians and Muslims in the state must be advocated by their leaders, in order to reduce future crises and killings due to religious differences.
  - ix. Anti grazing laws in Nigeria should be checked for improvement in such a way that the grazing land areas should be extremely far from the farming land, in order to minimise conflicts between herders and crop farmers due to the destruction crops by the herd.
  - x. Urgent security reform should be advocated to reduce banditry and terrorism in the state.
  - xi. Hate Speech (Prohibition) Bill in Nigeria should be well checked for improvement and such improvement must be enforced, so as to reduce hate preachings and their subsequent ethnic bigots that spread hatred in the state.
  - xii. There is also a very serious need for the government of Nigeria to organise seminar on the way some people of Plateau State view the creation of Jos North Local Government by the Babangida regime (the regime of former Head of State of Nigeria) as a ploy to cede the commercial capital to the Hausa/Fulani settlers, in order to reduce future crises from this perception that exists to date and remains strong.

## RESEARCH GAP

This research completely depended on the review of newspapers for data collection without a physical visit to the residential crises environments where people were killed with the destruction of properties, in order to obtain other physical data that may not have been captured in the newspapers and this is a research gap. Therefore, in subsequent research of this nature, this gap should be filled.

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