

Police officer, 9 residents killed in Plateau attack

From Ado Abubakar Musa
& Dickson S. Adama (Jos)

Ten people, including a police officer, have been killed in attacks on communities in Barkin Ladi Local Government Area of Plateau State.

Several other persons sustained varying degrees of injuries in the attacks, which occurred on Saturday.

The affected communities are Kopk, Sabon Layi, Rakung, Gangare and the General Hospital area (Zat and Bet).

The Plateau State Chairman of the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN), Ibrahim Yusuf Babayo, on Sunday confirmed that three herders were killed in Kopk and Sabon Layi communities.

Babayo said the first attack

occurred on Saturday, around 4:30 pm, when a herder, identified as Abbas Shehu, was shot dead by gunmen on his way home from the market.

He added that the second victim, Muhammad Hassan, was attacked at his home in Kopk community, while in Katako community, Musa Adamu was shot dead by gunmen.

Our correspondent gathered that the Saturday attacks heightened tension in Gangare, Katako and Sabon Layi, with residents fleeing helter-skelter.

Hours later, seven corpses, including that of the police officer, were recovered and deposited at the mortuary.

Security personnel were later deployed to Barkin Ladi town to restore law and order.

The Berom Youth Moulders-Association, led by Dalyop

Solomon Mwantiri, confirmed the killing of the six persons, as well as the police officer.

He said the officer was affected because his residence was among the places attacked.

Our correspondent spoke with the officer's son, Nehemiah, but he declined to disclose his father's identity due to current instructions and restrictions on the matter.

Nehemiah, however, said they were together when his father told him he was going somewhere before the attackers arrived and began shooting sporadically, and his father was caught in the attack.

Mwantiri said the attack occurred despite the heavy presence of security checkpoints and personnel across Barkin Ladi town.

He further said the association had passed a vote

of no confidence on the Sector 4 Commander of Operation Enduring Peace (OPEP), Victor Asuquo, and the Operations Officer, Captain Bello, over what it described as a consistent pattern of security failure, negligence and inability to protect lives and property within their jurisdiction.

"It is deeply disturbing that communities continue to come under coordinated attacks in broad daylight and at night without any swift or effective response from security operatives.

"Residents now live in constant fear, uncertainty and trauma while armed attackers move freely across communities unleashing terror on innocent civilians.

"The Berom Youth Moulders-Association also raises serious concern over the

response of the Plateau State Government to the recurring humanitarian crisis caused by these attacks.

"Since insecurity has become a perennial challenge in Plateau State, the association questions why the government has not considered establishing a full Ministry of Homeland Security and Humanitarian Services to coordinate proactive security policies, emergency response and support for affected communities," he said.

Calls and messages sent to the Plateau State Police Public Relations Officer, Alfred Alabo, for a reaction were not responded to as of the time of filing this report.

In recent days, insecurity has worsened in Barkin Ladi, Riyom and Bassa LGAs, with reports of multiple deaths and destruction of property.