

Plateau killings: Govt declares curfew, vows justice for victims

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One of those who sustained gunshot wounds during the Plateau attack receiving treatment, on Monday

- As gunmen kill 26, injure nine •Direct assault on peace, security of Plateau—PIDAN
- UNIJOS suspends exams, issues security alert •CAN, JNI condemn killings, demand justice

THE Plateau State government has imposed a 48-hour curfew, following the killing of 26 people, while nine others were injured in Angwan Rukuba area of Jos North Local Government of the state on Sunday.

The government declared the curfew to prevent the development from escalating to other parts of the state capital.

The State Commissioner of Police, CP Bassey Ewah, confirmed the attack, saying that men of his command, along with other security agencies, are on the trail of the perpetrators.

Gunmen on motorcycles, numbering about 20, at about 8:30 p.m. on Sunday, stormed Angwan Rukuba and opened fire at random on those within the vicinity.

The attack lasted for close to 30 minutes before they escaped from the scene.

An eyewitness who escaped the attack said: "I was in front of my shop when I heard gunshots from various directions. When I went outside to see what was going on, I noticed a group of gunmen shooting at random, while people were scrambling for cover.

"I hastily left my shop and hid at the back of a nearby police station. However, the majority of those gunned down were killed in a bar near the junction. The security personnel later arrived to secure the area."

When the youth learnt that the governor would be visiting the community early on Monday morning, they became enraged by the occurrence and removed the corpses they had earlier deposited at the mortuary and transported them to the Angwan Rukuba junction for him to see.

While addressing the youth beside the displayed corpses, Governor Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang, who sympathised with the residents, said security operatives were already on the trail of the perpetrators.

He also condemned the idea of mass burial, saying that those who died deserved proper burial, and promised that the state government would take care of those receiving treatment in various hospitals within the city, as well as help the families of the deceased.

"There will be no more mass burial; instead, we will communicate with the families and care for them, while those in the hospital will be cared for. The young man that issued a threat before the attack is already under arrest, and by the grace of God, those who carried out this attack will be arrested as well.

"We shall ensure that Plateau State does not lose its testimony of peace; this is what the enemy wanted. They want to disrupt the peace of the land; we will not allow them.

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"Let us be internally vigilant; share your information with us because, without information, we would not be able to achieve much. Let's honour the dead by evacuating the corpses back to the mortuary," he said.

The government, in a statement signed by the Commissioner for Information and Communication, Honourable Joyce Rendnap, had earlier declared the curfew.

Meanwhile, in its reaction to the incident, Plateau Initiative for Development and Advancement of the Natives (PIDAN) described the attack as barbaric, unprovoked, and a direct assault on the peace and security of the state.

In a statement by its president, Ambassador Danjuma Nanpon Sheni, and secretary general, Danjuma Auta, the leadership of PIDAN condemned the attack.

PIDAN said the continuous killings of Plateau people by militias were no longer acceptable, just as it implored the government and security agencies to take immediate action to tame the killers.

"The patience of the people of Plateau has reached its zenith, and our people will have no option but to take definitive action to defend ourselves.

"We cannot continue to fold our arms while the blood of our innocent and harmless people flows in our streets, at the hands of these enemies of peace."

It, therefore, called on the Federal Government and state government, as well as all security agencies, to apprehend the perpetrators and immediately bring them to justice.

In the meantime, the authorities of the University of Jos have announced the postponement of examinations and issued a security advisory following the attack in Angwan Rukuba, an area populated by many of its staff and students.

Acting on the directive of the vice chancellor, the institution confirmed that all examinations earlier scheduled for Monday, March 30, and Tuesday, March 31, have been postponed.

The university stated that the affected examinations would be rescheduled, with new dates to be communicated to students in due course.

In addition to the postponement, members of the university community were advised to exercise caution and remain vigilant in their daily activities, both on and off campus.

On its part, the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) strongly condemned the killing, describing the attack as horrific and unacceptable.

In a statement by its President, Archbishop Daniel Okoh, CAN said the attack turned a sacred day of peace, hope and reflection into one of bloodshed and grief.

"Palm Sunday is meant to be a day of peace. Instead, it became a day of bloodshed. Innocent Nigerians were hunted and killed in cold blood. This is not just tragic; it is unacceptable," Okoh said.

CAN said the attackers were reported to have disguised in uniforms, resembling those of security personnel, a development it described as deeply troubling and dangerous to public trust.

While expressing sorrow over the killings, CAN questioned the growing insecurity in parts of the country, asking why citizens could no longer feel safe even within their homes or during religious observances.

The association called for the immediate arrest of those responsible, warning that failure to ensure justice would further erode confidence in the country's security architecture.

CAN also raised concern over the use of fake military uniforms by the attackers, urging security agencies to investigate the trend and take proactive steps to prevent future occurrences.

While acknowledging efforts by the state government, the religious association stressed that temporary interventions were insufficient, insisting that Nigerians deserve lasting and effective security.

In light of the incident, CAN advised Christian faithful across the country to remain vigilant during the Holy Week, urging churches to take precautionary measures as they prepare for Good Friday and Easter celebrations.

“Be prayerful, but also be vigilant. Take deliberate steps to protect yourselves and your congregations. Stay alert and work with security agencies,” the statement urged.

CAN, however, encouraged Christians not to lose faith, noting that while the country is going through a difficult period, hope must not be extinguished.

Also, the state chapter of Jama’atu Nasril Islam (JNI) has expressed shock over the attack.

In a statement issued by its secretary, Dr Salim Musa Umar, JNI described the attack as barbaric, senseless and a grave threat to peace and coexistence in Plateau State.

“We are deeply pained by the magnitude of this tragedy. The sanctity of human life must never be violated under any circumstance. This act of violence is unacceptable and must be condemned by all,” the statement read.

JNI extended condolences to the bereaved families and prayed for the repose of the souls of the deceased while wishing the injured a speedy recovery.

The organisation appealed to residents across the state to remain calm and law-abiding, warning against any form of retaliation that could further inflame tensions.

“A nation cannot keep bleeding like this and expect to move forward. We owe the dead justice, the living protection, and our future a country where no community wakes up to gunfire on a sacred day,” Okoh said