

Gunmen kill five in Plateau, attack mourners at mass burial site

Isaac Shobayo | Jos

GUNMEN, on Tuesday night, killed five women and injured three others at Nding Susut community in Barakin-Ladi Local Government Area of Plateau State.

The hoodlums returned, on Wednesday, to attack a group of mourners at a mass burial site in the same council area, when rites were being performed for those killed the previous day.

On Tuesday, it was learnt that the gunmen carried out the attack at 10:45p.m.

In a statement, spokesman for the state police command, SP Alfred Alabo, who confirmed the incident, said the five were killed while relaxing in front of their house.

Alabo said those who sustained injuries were taken to the General Hospital.

A member of the community, Mathew Dung, who was at the mass burial site during the attack, said mourners from the community and neighboring villages had assembled to pay their last respects to those killed, when there was sporadic shootings.

Dung said: "We were at the mass burial site with a few men digging the graves, when all of a sudden, we started hearing gunshots from a nearby hill. Everyone at the site ran for his life, abandoning the corpses.

"As a result of the heavy gunfire, the aged, especially women, who could not run, were hit by bullets. We later

discovered that three villages were attacked simultaneously."

Another eyewitness, who is a journalist, Masara Kim, told the *Nigerian Tribune* on the phone that about five communities were attacked at the same time by the terrorists.

He said the mourners had just dug about a few meters of graves when the terrorists struck.

He said: "This forced them to hurriedly dump the bodies into the shallow graves and escape from the scene.

"There is an ongoing attack, actually, in communities 20 miles south of Jos. We are told there are more than five communities that are experiencing simultaneous attacks.

"I saw a man fall after he was shot by a terrorist who emerged from surrounding hills and started shooting and advancing in the direction of the community where I was. That was when we were observing the burial of seven persons who were killed last night [Tuesday] in a village located in Fan district of Barkin Ladi local council."

The publicity secretary of Berom Youth Moulder Association (BYM), Rweng Tengwom, said while the mass burial site was under attack, other neighbouring villages and communities also experienced simultaneous attacks.

He stated that the number of casualties could not be ascertained because those who escaped could not return to the community.