

Gunmen kill eight in fresh Plateau attack

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| By James Abraham

Gunmen on Thursday night invaded Mbwelle village in Bokkos Local Government Area of Plateau State and killed at least eight persons.

Most of the victims were members of the same family, our correspondent gathered.

Those killed included Elder Iliya Mangut Dakus, Mr Luck Titus Dakus, Mr Habila Istifanu Dakus, Mr Hassan Istifanus Dakus, Mrs Hassan Moses Dakus, Biggie Lucky Dakus, Sunday Gideon Dakus and Mr Innocent Barnabas Makwin.

The Chairman of the Community Peace Observers in Bokkos LGA, Kefas Mallai, confirmed the killings to The PUNCH in Jos on Friday.

He said the attack occurred around 11pm when the assailants invaded the community and opened fire indiscriminately on residents, leaving about three other persons injured while some community members were still missing.

Mallai said: “There was an attack last night at Mbwelle village. The village is very close to Bokkos town. So far eight persons have been confirmed dead this morning.

“The people are saying they want to protest because the security men have not protected them and the attack lasted for hours and yet, no presence of security to repel the assailants until those people finished and left. No trace.”

He added: “The attack lasted for several hours with no visible security presence to repel the attackers.”

Mallai further alleged that security forces did not respond despite the proximity of the area, and that personnel were currently deployed to protect a specific community suspected by natives of Bokkos to be the origin of the attackers.

Youth Leader of Bokkos, Christopher Luka, also confirmed the incident, describing it as “a sad and devastating assault on the people of Bokkos and Plateau State as a whole.”

“The gunmen came around 11pm and started shooting sporadically. They targeted one family mostly. We have eight confirmed dead, some seriously injured, and others still unaccounted for,” Luka said.

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Efforts to get the reaction of the Plateau State Police Command spokesman, DSP Alfred Alabo, were unsuccessful as of the time of filing this report.

The Media Officer for the Joint Military Taskforce, Chinonso Oteh, was not immediately available to speak on the incident when contacted.

“I will get back to you,” he said.

Our correspondent reports that Bokkos and other neighbouring LGAs of Plateau State have been facing security challenges in recent years.

The situation escalated last week when the Berom Youth Moulders Association raised alarm over unrelenting ambushes and killings targeting residents in Barkin Ladi, Riyom, and Jos South LGAs, even with security operatives on the ground.

In a statement signed by its National Publicity Secretary, Rwang Tengwong, the group, led by National President Dalyop Mwantiri, described the attacks as a calculated campaign of terror allegedly aimed at grabbing ancestral lands.

According to the association, on Wednesday, gunmen ambushed travellers returning from mining activities around the Great Commission area along the Bokkos Road, heading to Nding in Fan District of Barkin Ladi LGA, at about 4:15pm.

The attackers opened fire on the victims, killing Mr Ayuba Pam of Nding Sesut. Two others, Mr Alfred Dung and Mr Nathaniel Bitrus, sustained serious injuries and were receiving treatment in the hospital.

In a separate incident the same evening, around 6:30pm, gunmen ambushed and killed Mr Christopher Joshua, a father of three from the Byei community in Riyom LGA, along the Gwolhoss–Byei road as he returned home from his daily activities.

The BYM described the incidents as part of sustained aggression against Berom communities and expressed concern that such ambushes continued on busy rural roads used by farmers, miners, and travellers, despite security agencies knowing the flashpoints and hideouts of the attackers.

The association called on security agencies to immediately step up surveillance and patrols along critical corridors, including the Great Commission–Bokkos road, Great Commission–Gashish axis, Rahoss–Rim road, Kwi–Farin Lamba road, Gwolhoss–Jol–Sho road, and Rim–Bachi road.