

Communal clash leaves over 20 dead, 400 homes razed in Adamawa



FILE IMAGE

By Umar Yusuf

Yola—No fewer than 20 persons are feared killed following coordinated attacks by suspected ethnic militias on Kwah and Gyakan communities in Lamurde Local Government Area of Adamawa State.

Lamurde LGA, described as one of the most volatile areas in the state, has witnessed more than ten violent clashes in the last six months between the warring communities.

A dusk-to-dawn curfew imposed on the local government since December last year has remained in force due to persistent attacks that have reportedly claimed hundreds of lives.

According to residents, assailants from one side of the conflict stormed Gyakan in an early morning attack on Saturday, razing homes and displacing inhabitants.

The attackers were said to have later advanced to Kwah, about 20 kilometres away, where they continued the assault, looting properties and setting houses ablaze. However, the death toll may be higher, as additional bodies were recovered by residents after the eventual arrival of security personnel.

A local resident, Onisimus Onisimond, confirmed that four more bodies were discovered as of 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, with further recoveries expected to increase the figure.

A former Supervisory Councillor in Lamurde LGA, Carlos Nicodemus, who spoke from one of the affected communities, described the attack as brutal. According to him, hundreds of armed attackers rode into Gyakan on motorcycles between 5:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m. on Saturday, wielding AK-47 rifles and machetes. He said the attackers unleashed violence on defenceless residents before moving to Kwah, where the destruction continued.

“The attackers came in large numbers, shooting and burning houses. In Gyakan alone, we recovered 10 bodies, while one person was killed in Kwah. Over 400 houses have been destroyed,” Nicodemus said.

He added that due to the delayed arrival of security forces—reportedly more than 30 hours after the attack—residents were unable to immediately recover victims. “After soldiers regained control of the area, five additional bodies were discovered, bringing the total death toll to 20,” he stated.

Nicodemus further lamented that the prolonged siege prevented families from burying their dead, as fear and insecurity persisted until troops intervened.

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The ongoing crisis, reportedly linked to long-standing land disputes spanning nearly three decades, has claimed over 3,000 lives over time and prompted the Adamawa State Government to set up a commission of inquiry.

Reacting to the latest violence, the former Village Head of Gyakan, Wali Batakuma, described the attack as shocking and unusually savage.

“We were taken completely by surprise. Armed men on motorcycles, believed to be from the Chobo ethnic group, attacked in a coordinated manner—shooting, burning houses, and attacking fleeing residents with machetes,” he said.

Batakuma said the affected communities had done nothing to provoke the attack, adding that over 400 houses were burnt and properties looted.

He also criticised the delayed response of security agencies, noting that intervention came long after the attackers had inflicted extensive damage.

Attempts to get reactions from the Chino side of the conflict proved abortive.