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# 300 Feared Killed In Fresh Plateau Violence

MONDAY, 08 MARCH 2010 05:53 EDIT2







**By Isa Abdulsalami, Jos (with agency reports)**

Again, mayhem was unleashed on Plateau State at the weekend with more than over 200 people feared killed at Dogo Nahawa village in Jos South Local Council.

But the Plateau State Christian Elders Consultative Forum said over 500 people were slaughtered in the fresh orgy of sectarian violence.

The victims, mostly of Berom extraction, were said to have been killed by suspected Fulani herdsmen who invaded the village yesterday at about 3.00 a.m.

According to eyewitness accounts, more than 300 bodies - many of them women and children - lay dead on the streets of the village.

It was also gathered that the Fulani, on arrival from the bush, started shooting into the air to force their victims out of their houses only to be matcheted.

Many of their victims who expectedly were mostly children and women as well as a few men were hacked down and beheaded. The operation, according to witnesses, lasted from 3.00 a.m. to 6.00 a.m. yesterday without anybody coming to their rescue.

Jos South Council Chairman, Mr. Moses Dalyop and the member in the House of Assembly from that area, Mr. Dalyop Mancha, visited the area, condemning the dastardly attack.

Also, the State Police Public Relations Officer, Mohammed Lerama, confirmed the attack.

The community's leader, Peter Gyang, said they would no longer observe the 'so-called' curfew.

His words: "We will be forced to go into our houses by 6.00 p.m. but some invaders would come and attack us without any intervention from the military or police. So, there would be no curfew again so that we can protect ourselves."

The Plateau State Commissioner for Information and Communications, Gregory Yenlong, through the Director of Press and Public Affairs, James Mannok, yesterday morning called reporters to converge at the Press Centre of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Jos, in preparation to visit Dogo Nahawa Village.

The Commissioner, on the way, led the journalists to the Plateau State Specialist Hospital where corpses of victims of the attack were also deposited. The Chief Medical Director of the hospital, Dr. Pam Dantong, led journalists to the mortuary where 18 corpses of those slain were deposited and seven others injured were receiving treatment.

At Dogo Nahawa village, journalists counted about 70 corpses initially but had to start recounting as more bodies were being brought in.

Journalists counted about 103 corpses there while other bodies were still coming in and they stopped counting. A resident described the incident thus: "In fact, it was a killing field."

As journalists were led to the other field, a farmland, corpses of mostly children and women littered everywhere, making it difficult to know the exact number, especially when journalists were told that there were more corpses deposited at the Jos University Teaching Hospital (JUTH), at the permanent site which is far away.

Yerlong was about addressing journalists about government's position on the renewed hostility when the Gbong Gwon Jos, Da Buba Gyang, arrived at the scene and he had to shelve it to attend to the Berom monarch.

The Gbong Gwom, who was taken to where the corpses were heaped, expressed shock and he addressed the people who were wailing and crying in Berom language, saying that what happened was an act of "man's inhumanity to man." He told the people not to think of any reprisal attacks, adding that they should not take the laws into their hands.

And in a statement yesterday entitled: "Fresh Attack in Jos, Why did soldiers refuse to respond," the Plateau State Christian Elders Consultative Forum, said: "We the Christian Elders of Plateau State strongly condemn the attack on Plateau State Christians by the Hausa-Fulani Muslim militants in the early hours of this morning in Dogo Nahawa community in Jos, resulting in the killing of over 500 persons. Their dead bodies are still lying in their own pool of blood as we speak.

"The attack, yet another jihad and provocation of the Christians, started at about 1.30 a.m. last night. We are in touch with the survivors though many of them are still in trauma.

"Dogo Nahawa is a Christian community. The eye-witnesses say the Hausa-Fulani Muslim militants came chanting 'Allahukabar' and broke into homes, cutting human beings, including children and women with their knives and cutlasses.

"These militants we understand came into Plateau State from neighbouring Bauchi State. We are indeed worried as we have severally made it clear about the role of the Nigerian Army.

The statement by the National Co-ordinator and Secretary-General, Bishop Andersen Bok and Dr. Musa Pam, added: "Since the last religious crisis when the Federal Government mandated the Nigerian Army to take over the security of the state, we have never failed to show our fears and worries because of the role the military has played in previous crisis.

"Shortly after the militants besieged Dogo Nahawa this morning, we contacted the soldiers at exactly 1.30 a.m.

since they are in charge of the security of the state. But we were shocked to find out that the soldiers did not react until about 3.30 a.m. after the Muslim attackers had finished their job and left.

"We want the soldiers to again explain reason for this deliberate delay which we consider part of the ploy. We want to state here that we no longer have any confidence in the Nigerian Army as the security of Plateau State because of their bias against Christians.

"We are also worried because the Hausa-Fulani Muslim militants this time descended on Governor Jonah Jang's Berom community, about 15 minutes kilometres from his family residence. We are tired of this genocide on our Christian brothers and state here that we will not let this go unchallenged."

Acting President Goodluck Jonathan deployed hundreds of troops and police to quell January's unrest, in which community leaders put the death toll at more than 400. Official police figures estimated the death toll from the clashes two months ago at 326.

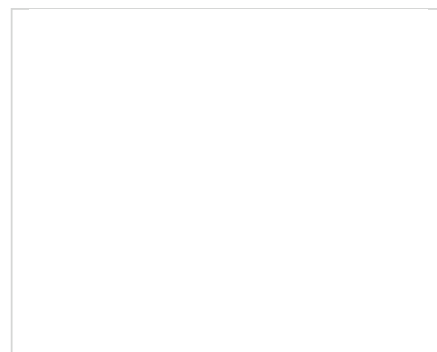
Yenlong said the state government might consider extending a dusk-to-dawn curfew still in place after January's unrest. It was not immediately clear what triggered the latest unrest, but thousands have died in religious and ethnic violence in North Central Nigeria over the past 10 years.

According to Agence France Presse (AFP), the tension is rooted in decades of resentment between indigenous groups, mostly Christians or animists, who are vying for control of fertile farmlands with migrants and settlers from the Hausa and Fulani-speaking north.

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