



Nigeria: Plateau Violence Spreads to Bokkos, 24 Killed

BY ONIMISI ALAO, 29 MARCH 2013

Jos — The resurgent violence in parts of Plateau State spread on Wednesday night to areas that had remained crisis-free, leaving at least 24 people dead including two policemen.

Eighteen villagers were killed when unknown gunmen attacked Mangor and Matol villages in Bokkos Local Government Area in the early hours of yesterday, residents said.

In what was said to be reprisals on herders who were suspected to be behind the attacks, six more people were killed, bringing the total dead to 24.

Bokkos had remained largely free from violence even as bouts of deadly communal crisis happened in many parts of the state over the past years.

Before the Wednesday night attacks, the most recent incidents happened in Riyom and Wase, leaving dozens dead.

The Bokkos attackers came with what some accounts said were sophisticated guns and other dangerous weapons, firing at people most of whom were asleep.

Residents said the attacks lasted for nearly two hours before personnel of the Special Task Force (STF) arrived and repelled the attackers.

Soon after this, villagers who suspected Fulani herders of being involved attacked herdsmen residing close to the Bokkos Fertiliser Plant, killing at least six according to Fulani leaders.

Chairman of Bokkos LGA, Zakka Mashingil Akos, said 18 people were killed by the attackers while STF men killed six gunmen. He said when the STF men got to one of the villages, Matol, the attackers opened fire on them resulting in a shootout.

Plateau State Secretary of Miyetti-Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN) Muhammadu Nura said Fulani people were killed in the "reprisals", but he denied that the night attacks were carried out by them.

"I have no report from anyone that my people attacked anybody anywhere and I would know if there was anything like that," Nura told Daily Trust yesterday.

He said six Fulani men were picked up by STF men as if they were being rescued from the reprisals but were shot dead by the same STF personnel. "The six went away with the STF because they thought the STF came to rescue them, instead of which the STF took them away and killed them," Nura said.

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