

15 civilians, 1 soldier killed in Riyom attacks

From Onimisi Alao, Jos

At least 16 people, including a member of the Special Task Force (STF), were killed in four villages of Bachit district of Riyom Local Government Area of Plateau State by gunmen who attacked the villages.

Sources said the family house of late Senator Gyang Dalyop Dantong, who died in 2012 under similar circumstances, was burnt down by the gunmen and his father and other family members narrowly escaped.

Three vehicles, one of them belonging to the late Senator Dangtong's younger brother and several houses in the area were also burnt down by the gunmen.

Confirming the incident last

Friday night, member representing Riyom state constituency in the Plateau State House of Assembly and majority leader, Hon Daniel Dem said 12 people were killed by the attackers as corpses had been retrieved in some nearby bushes.

"Suspected Fulani gunmen attacked four villages in Bachit district of Riyom Local Government Council and burnt down the family house of the late Senator Gyang Dantong while his father and other family members escaped narrowly," Dem said.

A younger brother of the late Senator Dangtong, Mr Rwang Dantong, who spoke to *Sunday Trust* yesterday said the number of the dead had risen to 16. He added that the attackers meant to wipe out the whole community as

they hit the community from all directions.

"If not because God was with our people and they fled their houses, a lot more people would have been killed," Dantong said, adding that the attackers stormed the community at 2 am on Friday when people were supposed to be deeply asleep.

He said a pregnant woman on the point of delivery was among those killed in the attacks.

Spokesman of the Special Task Force, Capt. Ikedichi Iweha who confirmed the attacks, said soldiers were still doing a mop-up operation. He said, "A soldier was among the dead. We are still carrying out a mop-up operation and have not been able to establish the casualty figures."