

MIYETTI THREATENS TO SUE PLATEAU STF OVER ALLEGED KILLINGS



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MACBAN claims these pictures portray the nature of attack on their settlement in Bachit, Riyom local government area of Plateau State by the STF on the 5th of October 2015 an allegation the STF denies, saying it is consistent with the skirmishes between Fulani and their cohabitants.

Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN) in Plateau State had last October, accused the Special Task Force (STF) Sector 9 of attacking and killing three of its members in Dyan village of Bachit in Riyom local government area.

MACBAN claimed that the STF had burnt 40 houses, five motorcycles and killed 35 cows and seven turkeys. Perhaps, of all the alleged crimes, MACBAN was particularly irked that those who launched the attack took away the three corpses and said that efforts by relatives of the deceased to recover the bodies for burial failed.

Now, the association says it has concluded arrangements to take the STF to court. Chairman

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Riyom MACBAN, Alh. Isah Abdullahi told Weekly Trust that he and other Fulani leaders had demanded for N500 million as compensation from the STF to rebuild their destroyed homes but it was turned down.

Abdullahi while narrating the genesis of the incident of October 5 said it started with the killing of Alh. Sale Jibiro known people on the September 30, 2014, while the deceased was on his way to receive money for some turkeys he had sold to the STF Sector 9 commander in Bachit.

Abdullahi explained: "The next day, some STF men came to deliver the money to one Alhaji Ado but he insisted they call Sale first but his number was not connecting and when we called his house we were told he had not returned home. We launched a search for Sale because on the day he went missing, we heard a gunshot but we did not link it to any one of our members."

He added that: "During the search, we were attacked by some youths which led to a skirmish between some Berom and Fulani youths. Two days later, the STF attacked and burnt the settlements in Dyan village killing three people, 35 cows, and seven turkeys."

Daily Trust reported last year that the alleged attack came during the Eid-el-Kabir period and a day after unknown gunmen attacked some villages in the area killing 16, including a member of the STF.

MACBAN state chairman, Alhaji Haruna Boro Hussaini, was then quoted saying: "The STF burnt our settlements and shot 30 cattle dead while three of our youths were also killed in the process. How is it possible that those who are supposed to protect us are the ones attacking us; who do we complain to?"

STF media and information officer, Capt. Ikedichi Iweha, had in that report denied the alleged attack, saying "we cannot just wake up and attack anybody. We did not attack any settlement, persons or cattle."

But MACBAN Riyom chairman had followed the media report with a petition to the STF commander, Major

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General David Enetie, asking that the task force pay the sum of N500 million as compensation for the killings and destruction and urged the commander to look into the issue within three days.

Abdullahi, who engaged the legal services of Smart Irabor and Company, in a petition dated October 7, 2014, and copied the state governor and director of the Department of Security Services (DSS), gave the names of the deceased as Abubakar Mohammed (35 years), Mohammed Umar (60) and Abubakar Mohammed (13).

Alhaji Samaila Umar, a younger brother of one of the deceased also told Weekly Trust that the soldiers and police officers that attacked their settlements had arrived in Toyota Hilux pickups and opened fire on the community.

"They killed my elder brother and his son as well as the son of our community imam. They also left with the corpses, denying us the opportunity to bury them. They burnt our homes and killed our cattle; we had to relocate to our relatives in neighbouring communities. Even when we met with the commander in Jos, he still told us that he was not aware of the incident," Umar said.

Capt. Iweha while responding to the latest development and the legal action taken, said the STF cannot stop MACBAN from going to court but described the allegations as false, misleading and capable of truncating the process of peace and reconciliation in the area.

He said the nature of attack as claimed by MACBAN was consistent with the numerous retaliatory skirmishes between the Fulani and their cohabitants stressing that: "The Sector 9 commander does not even stay at Bachit, his office is at Makera. The STF clearly captured the attack they are alleging in the chronicles of our activities as skirmishes between communities which the STF helped to repel. We got the report of the missing Alhaji Saleh on the 1st of October and our troops went in search for him."

Capt. Iweha added that: "At a point, his motorcycle was recovered but he was not found. A few days later some Fulani militia attacked our base in Bachit and in the process a personnel was killed and his rifle missing. They launched several other attacks to the extent that we had to launch 'Operation Restore Peace' and the commander went to the area and held several meetings with their leaders."

He noted that: "The STF cannot attack the people it is protecting. It is on record that where the Fulani have had attacks and their cattle killed, the STF have provided logistics in them to evacuate their cattle. The STF is there for their protection as evident in our deployments in Berom and Fulani settlements. In fact, they have made requests for increased deployment and this has been obliged by the magnanimity of the commander."

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capt. Iweha, you should stop taking side in this issue, tell your men to return these corses to thier families for burial, you must have the fear of GOD in your mind, these fulanis are also human beings, you are not an ordinary man, you are a army capt. for everybody, not for the biroms.

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