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Property   Women Entrepreneurs

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General

20 killed in Plateau community attack

By Hir Joseph & Lami Sadiq, Jos | Publish Date: Sep 17 2015 4:26AM | Updated Date: Sep 17 2015 2:07AM

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About 20 people were reportedly killed when gunmen invaded Kadunung community in Mangu Local Government Area of Plateau State, Daily Trust gathered.

Casualty figure was not officially available at press time, but displaced persons who fled the community said no fewer than 20 people were killed in the attack.

They said the attackers stormed the town with sophisticated weapons, killing as they burned down houses and other property.

"We were lucky to have escaped the heavily armed militia. They killed our people; we counted about 20 bodies," a resident of the area told newsmen.

 He accused the Berom people of being behind the incident, alleging that it was targeted at Fulanis and their property.

 Another displaced person, Usman Abubakar, told newsmen the attackers were from Barkin Ladi, which suffered a similar invasion three days ago. The Barkin Ladi attack was blamed on Fulani nomads. The Special Task Force (STF), confirmed the invasion, but

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did not say anything about the casualty figure.

Spokesman of the STF, Captain Ikedichi Iweha, said men of the operation, recently renamed Operation Safe Haven, responded to an alarm and repelled the attackers. He added that the attackers burned down some houses.

Captain Iweha said the STF cannot confirm that the attack was a reprisal over the Barkin Ladi invasion of Berom communities, but added that the matter is under investigation.

Meanwhile, Daily Trust learnt that efforts by the peace committee made up of Berom and Fulani stakeholders to tackle crisis in the area may have suffered a setback because of the recent turn of events.

Members of the committee had planned a meeting with local government chairmen of the affected areas, from where they will proceed to visit and hold talks with members of the troubled communities on both sides.

The lawmaker representing Barkin Ladi/Riyom, Barrister Istifanus Gyang, had earlier in the week appealed to both Berom and Fulani people to sheath their swords.

Also speaking, the senator representing Plateau-north and former governor of the state, Jonah David Jang, condemned the spate of attacks in the area.

A statement signed by the senator's media aide, Chris Gyang, said, " the killing is yet another pointer to the fact that at the centre of these crises is a fundamental moral question that must be honestly addressed by all stakeholders if we must entrench lasting peace in that war-ravaged area of my constituency.''

He lamented that many years after bloody conflicts between Berom and Fulani began, "not a single culprit has been publicly identified nor prosecuted by the authorities concerned."

The former governor challenged security forces and socio-political leaders to be just, fair and honest in addressing issues underlying the crises without consideration for tribe or religion.

While calling on both Beroms and Fulani to continue to exploit all structures and avenues put in place to promote dialogue and reconciliation, Senator Jang reiterated his commitment to working with all individuals and groups in the state and National Assembly to ensure sustainable peace in the zone and Plateau State. He also condoled with parents of the children who lost their lives in Sunday school collapse in Bukuru.

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