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How renewed attacks claimed many lives in Plateau

By Dickson S. Adama, Jos | May 9, 2020 3:32 AM



Last Sunday was the 40-day prayer for Yusuf Abdullahi's father in-law, who disappeared alongside his apprentice when they both went to the bush around the Miango area of Bassa Local Government Area to rear his cattle. Since then, both of them have not been found; hence they were presumed dead and a 40-day prayer was organised for them.

After the prayer, Abdullahi, 32, popularly called Babawo, who plied the Jos-Miango route on a daily basis as a commercial driver in his Peugeot station wagon, went out for business as usual.

Our correspondent gathered that when he returned about 8:30pm that Sunday, he went straight to his wife's provision shop at Miango to help her. It was while at the shop that some gunmen came at some minutes past 10pm and shot him. He died instantly. The gunmen did not take anything from the shop.

A family source who did not want his name mentioned, for security reasons, said that when they heard gunshots, he knew their brother was affected, so he called the attention of security men before they went to the shop and saw Abdullahi's lifeless body.

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He suspected that the attack would not be unconnected with the shooting of four youths coming from Kwal to Miango on two motorcycles that night.

For a long time, there have been recurring attacks and counterattacks between the people of Irigwe in Miango and the Hausa community in that area. Any attack on one side is usually blamed on the other community. The attacks are part of the larger ethno-religious strife which has been occurring in the state since 2011.

The killing of Abdullahi is, therefore, believed to be a reprisal for the killing of the four youths from Kwal; more so, that a similar attack was launched on the Hausa community in Kwal, where a mosque and other properties were destroyed.

Our source said Abdullahi was buried the following day, and that they were in shock because their brother did not know anything about the previous attack.

He said although security agents had been deployed to the town, the people, particularly the Hausa, were living in fear, and many of them, especially women and children, were leaving for safer places.

He said many of the Hausa people had been living in Miango for over 200 years, adding that the recent spate of violence was unprecedented.

The four boys who were earlier killed are Friday Musa, 25; Chohu Gado, 27; Emmanuel Kure, 22 and Tanta Abba, 27.

It was gathered that two of the boys, who were from Miango, went to visit their friends in Kwal, about three kilometers away, on that Sunday afternoon. As they decided to return about 8pm, their friends from Kwal decided to see them off on their motorcycles since it was late. They were attacked on the way. Three of them died instantly while one later died in a hospital at Miango.

An elder brother to one of the deceased boys (Emmanuel Kure), Gerald Ishaya Kure, said he wondered why some persons would just lay ambush against people on transit and kill them without any provocation.

He said his younger brother was a hard working and nice boy who hardly had problems with anyone. He lamented that Emmanuel could no longer collect his certificate of apprenticeship, having learnt how to make the POP ceiling.



Late Emmanuel Kure's family at his burial site

He urged security operatives to be more proactive in protecting the lives and property of people in the area.

Commenting on the killings, the chairman of Bassa Local Government Council, Dr. Chindo Gona, said it was painful to continue losing innocent people, stressing that the attacks must stop.

Speaking when he paid a condolence visit to the paramount ruler of Irigwe Kingdom, The Rev Ronku Aka in his palace, Gona said God would expose all the attackers. He lamented that while the world is facing the COVID-19 pandemic, the people of the area were facing double tragedy.

In another attack that Sunday night at the Naraguta area of Jos North Local Government Area, one Ali Shekara was shot and killed by unknown gunmen while he was on his way home. Shekara was an aide to the chairman, Transition Committee of Jos North Local Government and a former supervisory councilor in the council.

People from the area who spoke to our correspondent wondered what could be the rationale behind the attacks. They could not tell if the killing was political, religious or criminally motivated.

Also recounting their ordeal, the Ardo of Jos North, Aliko Mohammed, said he heard gunshots that night but did not know what was happening as he was not feeling well. According to him, it was later that one Baba Dauda was sent to inform him of what happened. He immediately contacted the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) in the area, who came with his men to take away the deceased.

Mohammed said he knew Shekara as a man of peace.

The following morning, attention was shifted to Shimlang in Mangu Local Government Area of the state, where gunmen shot a man and his son in their farm. The man died instantly but his son survived with serious injuries. The deceased's name is Michael Maichibi, while his son is Climshak Michael.

Commenting on the attack, the member representing Mangu constituency in the Plateau State House of Assembly, Bala N. Fwangje, expressed shock, saying the incident was already causing apprehension among the people because it was not the first.

He told our correspondent that their women had been raped several times on their farms by hoodlums. He said urgent steps must be taken by the authorities to stop the atrocities, adding that the deceased had already been buried.

When contacted, the police public relations officer in the state, Uba Gabriel Obaba, confirmed the killings and said investigation was on to unravel those behind the dastardly acts.

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