

Eight Killed As Fresh Violence Erupts In Plateau

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cover daily

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Wed, 24 Jan 2024 7:28:06 WAT



No fewer than eight people were confirmed dead in fresh violence that erupted Monday in Mangu town of Mangu Local Government Area of Plateau State, *Daily Trust* reports.

Governor Caleb Mutfwang, who hails from the volatile LGA, has imposed a 24-hour curfew in Mangu and environs following the violence in the area.

Reports indicated that while some people have been killed and others injured, many could not be traced after they fled their houses.

Religious leaders, security and government officials confirmed the development, with some sources alleging that it had to do with cattle rustling attempts that were resisted, resulting in full-scale mayhem.

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However, the Security Adviser to the Plateau State governor, retired Brigadier General Shipi Gakji attributed Monday's conflict to a dispute over right of way.

According to him: "The current happening in Mangu is as a result of a misunderstanding between two parties that escalated. But the security agencies are on the ground trying as much as possible to see that they bring everything to order.

"However, typical of such incidences, hoodlums and miscreants tried to seize the opportunity to create havoc, which is one of the things that escalated and led to the imposition of a state of emergency in Mangu," General Gakji said.

Residential houses, mosques and churches were reportedly burnt by assailants from both sides of the divide, it was learnt.

Speaking on the development, the Deputy Chairman of Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI), Mangu LGA, Malam Adamu Abdulsalam, told one of our correspondents yesterday that six mosques, including the Juma'at mosque at Anguwan Dawo, were burned during the incident.

"As I am talking to you now, we have eight dead bodies in the mosque. But we don't know if we will recover more casualties tomorrow because there is a curfew in the town. We are going to bury the dead tomorrow (today) by the special grace of God," he said.

Imam Abdullahi Maisaje, the Chief Imam of Dawo Juma'at mosque, and Secretary of Ulama Council in Mangu, also confirmed to Daily Trust that his mosque was also burned down.

"I can confirm to you that many people were killed. My elder brother was burnt inside his house. I saw four dead bodies but I cannot give the exact number of those that died during the incident.

"Six mosques were burnt at different locations in Mangu including Audi Islamiyya School. Many people were injured and are currently receiving treatment at the hospital," Maisaje said.

On the other hand, a resident of Mangu, Mathias Ibrahim, said the Monday incident spread to Dercom and Alogom areas of the town and continued to spread until two COCIN churches in Sabon-Kasuwa, Deden and Assemblies of God's Church were set ablaze.

A source said a youth who was attacked by the herders died as the fight spread to the town.

The source said some women also mobilized to a nearby checkpoint to protest, saying that the place of the initial attack was close to a military checkpoint and they did little or nothing to prevent or tackle the attackers.

The women were however said to have been pacified, and they returned to their houses.

When contacted, the Chairman of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Mangu Branch, Rev Timothy Daluk, said some deaths were recorded on both the Christian and Muslim sides, but that they were yet to get the exact figures.

He, however, said that some of his members were already confirmed dead, saying they were from the same family and were burnt in their houses. He gave their names as Dauda Nenpon and Beatrice Dauda.

He called for calm to be restored, saying that violence and killings are not in anyone's good.

He said he has been speaking with some of his Muslim friends who are leaders of their communities to try and calm the youths as he was doing from his side.

We've deployed security – OPSH

Captain Oya James, who is the Media/Information Officer of Operation Safe Haven (OPSH), a security task force maintaining peace in the area, confirmed the incident, adding that troops had been deployed to calm the situation.

“Troops have been deployed; some reinforcements have been made with some scorpions and armoured tanks so that the situation can be controlled,” he said.

Mutfwang declares 24 hours curfew

In the aftermath of the renewed violence, Governor Mutfwang has imposed a 24-hour curfew in Mangu LGA.

A statement by his Director of Press and Public Affairs, Gyang Bere, said, “Governor Mutfwang decided after consultations with the relevant security agencies. He stated that only persons on essential duties are allowed to move within the Local Government area until further notice.

“He urged all citizens, especially residents of Mangu Local Government area, to comply with the directive and assist the security personnel by providing reliable information to restore peace and order in the area.

“The governor lamented that some people are still determined to create an atmosphere of insecurity in the state, despite the government’s efforts to end the activities of terrorist elements.

“Mutfwang expressed his sympathy to the families of the victims and the injured, and assured them that the government will not relent in ensuring lasting peace in the state”, the media aide said.

Daily Trust recalled that the latest crisis in Plateau erupted exactly one month after deadly attacks around Mangu and Barkin Ladi LGAs which claimed nearly 200 lives.

While President Bola Tinubu and other leaders condemned the attack, and military and police high chiefs visited Plateau State on fact-finding missions, isolated killings continued up till the latest incident that led to the slamming of curfew in the locality.

Located in the central part of Plateau State, Mangu Local Government hosts the factory of Nigeria’s first bottled water; SWAN Spring Water, located at the foot of the Kerang Volcanic Mountains.

The LGA has been in the news since May last year, for bad reasons. On the 28th of June last year, the state government had to impose a curfew in some parts of the locality following similar violence, caused by clashes between natives and people who are described as “settlers”.