

6 Killed In Fresh Attack In Plateau



community leaders during meeting after attacks in marit and gashish communities of barkin ladi lga of plateau state, yesterday

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At least six people were killed in renewed attacks by gunmen on Marit and Gashish communities in the Barkin Ladi Local Government Area of Plateau State.

The incident, which occurred on Monday, also left many others injured. Victims were rushed to the hospital for treatment.

Sources told *Daily Trust* that the gunmen invaded the communities while residents were asleep.



Hon. Stephen Pwajok Gyang, Chairman of Barkin Ladi LGA, confirmed the incident in a statement by his Press Secretary, Mercy Yop Chuwang.

He noted that the victims were given a mass burial on Monday.

The chairman condemned the attacks and called for urgent, proactive measures to prevent further bloodshed in the area.

“During a visit to the injured victims at Barkin Ladi General Hospital, Hon. Pwajok expressed deep sorrow and disappointment over the resurgence of violence, especially at a time when the local government is making concerted efforts to promote peace and stability,” the statement read.

He commended the efforts of local vigilantes and security agencies and urged them to intensify surveillance and responsiveness.

He also called on stakeholders, including security agencies, community leaders and residents, to work together to restore peace and stability.

The council boss prayed for divine comfort for the affected families and urged health workers to prioritise the needs of the injured.

The latest violence happened weeks after similar attacks in Bokkos and Bassa LGAs between March and April, where over 100 people, including women and children, were killed.

The incidents were also followed by reports of cattle being poisoned or shot in Bassa, Riyom and Mangu LGAs.

Although the motive for the latest attack remains unclear, security operatives have vowed to investigate and apprehend the perpetrators.

Personnel from Operation Safe Haven have been deployed to the affected communities to maintain order.

Daily Trust reports that before Monday's attack, Marit and Gashish communities had enjoyed relative peace since a 2018 attack on villages in the Gashish District that left numerous people dead.

While Barkin Ladi has long suffered from clashes between farming and herding communities, Marit and Gashish communities has seen improved coexistence over the past year, largely due to efforts by traditional rulers, religious leaders, and youth representatives, who have worked to prevent and resolve conflict.

These stakeholders have played a critical role in identifying flashpoints and ensuring justice for crimes, which helped sustain peace until the latest incident.

GOC convenes stakeholders' meeting to de-escalate tension

In a bid to de-escalate the growing security tension in Barkin Ladi LGA following a recent breach, the General Officer Commanding (GOC) 3 Division of the Nigerian Army and Commander of Operation SAFE HAVEN, Major General Folusho Oyinlola, on Tuesday, convened a meeting with key stakeholders to strategise on improving the security situation.

The engagement, which included stakeholders from Sector 4 and the Forward Operating Base (FOB) Gashish, brought together heads of security agencies, traditional rulers, religious and community leaders, youth and women representatives, as well as government officials.

In his address, Major General Oyinlola commended the people of Barkin Ladi for their continued cooperation with security agencies and their longstanding commitment to peaceful coexistence.

He stressed that Barkin Ladi must not be allowed to descend into further conflict, calling for the strengthening of early warning systems to ensure a timely response to emerging threats.

The commander said security agencies are intensifying operations to disrupt and dismantle the activities of criminal elements and ensure justice is served.

He urged stakeholders to prioritise dialogue over violence in addressing grievances and encouraged residents to support security efforts by providing timely and actionable information.

He further tasked the local government with establishing a reliable biometric database of residents and immigrants to mitigate risks associated with undocumented individuals.

The Dagwom Rwei and Chairman of the Barkin Ladi Traditional Council, HRH Edward Bot, condemned the recent attacks and called for an immediate end to hostilities.

He urged all parties to conduct themselves within the bounds of the law.

Also speaking, the Chairman of Barkin Ladi LGA, Gyang Pwajok, decried the issue of underage grazing, describing it as a recurring trigger of conflict.

He commended the swift intervention by Operation SAFE HAVEN in the Gashish community, which helped prevent the situation from escalating further.

Other stakeholders at the meeting expressed deep sorrow over the recent loss of lives and called for a comprehensive review of the frameworks regulating the interactions between farmers and herders in the area.

JNI condemns attacks, urges calm

The Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI) in Barkin Ladi LGA has strongly condemned the recent attacks in the area and called on residents to remain calm in the face of the growing security concerns.

Speaking during a meeting on Tuesday, Ishaq Isa, General Secretary of JNI in the LGA, described the killing of residents in the Gashish community as inhumane and deeply troubling.

Citing Chapter 5, Verse 32 of the Holy Quran, Isa emphasised that the sanctity of human life must be upheld regardless of religious or ethnic affiliation.

He noted that the verse warns against the unlawful taking of innocent lives and said that saving one life is akin to saving all of humanity.

He questioned the moral and religious justification for such senseless killings, stressing that no faith supports such acts of violence.

Isa also urged security agencies in the area to intensify efforts in tackling the growing menace of drug abuse, which he identified as a major contributor to rising criminal activity.

Attack a deliberate plot to wipe out communities – Berom youths

The Berom Youth Moulders Association (BYM) has condemned the attack on the Gashish community, describing it as a deliberate and systematic attempt to wipe out Berom communities and seize their ancestral lands.

In a statement issued by the group’s Secretary General, Bature Iliya Adazaram, on behalf of the National President, Barr. Dalyop Solomon Mwantiri, BYM, alleged that the renewed attacks by suspected Fulani militants are part of a broader agenda to instil fear, forcefully displace residents and enable land grabbing in the area.

“The resurgence of these attacks, targeting not only Berom communities but other residents of Plateau State and beyond, is intended to intimidate, displace, and eliminate opposition to the militants’ expansionist ambitions,” the statement read.

The group expressed deep concern over the persistent attacks despite prior warnings.

“These atrocities are deeply disturbing, especially considering that early warning alerts about the influx of suspected bandits disguised as Fulani were communicated to relevant authorities.

“Unfortunately, the attackers continue to exploit the shortage of security personnel to strike at vulnerable communities, sparing neither women nor children, as witnessed in the latest assault,” the group said.

BYM further lamented that the Gashish community, still recovering from the horrors of the August 23, 2018, and 2023 Christmas Eve massacres, which claimed over 230 lives, has again been thrown into mourning.

They warned that the continued attacks pose an existential threat not just to Kakuruk village but to other neighbouring settlements in the area.

The association therefore urged security agencies – including Operation Safe Haven (OPSH), the Nigerian Police Force, and the Department of State Services – to urgently deploy kinetic military strategies to neutralise the looming danger and avert another round of what they described as “Impending genocide on the Plateau.”

The group also called for the immediate arrest and prosecution of the perpetrators of the Gashish attacks.

They demanded that those previously apprehended for similar crimes, including illegal arms dealings, be transparently prosecuted to restore public confidence in the justice system and end the cycle of violence.

Fulani community denies involvement

The Plateau State chapter of the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN) has denied allegations linking its members to the recent attack on the Gashish community in Barkin Ladi LGA.

In response to claims made by the Berom Youth Moulders Association (BYM), MACBAN State Chairman, Alhaji Ibrahim Yusuf Babayo, refuted the accusations during a telephone interview with our correspondent, stating that the group was not involved in the incident.

“We strongly condemn any attack on human life, regardless of its nature. It is not the responsibility of our members to carry out attacks on communities.

“This is not the first time our group has been accused of actions we know nothing about. These allegations are not new, and we firmly reject them,” Babayo said.

He further urged security agencies to thoroughly investigate the matter and bring the actual perpetrators to justice.

MACBAN reiterated its commitment to peaceful coexistence and urged all communities in Plateau State to avoid inflammatory accusations that could escalate tensions.