

30 Killed In Taraba Communal Clash



houses burnt by suspected herdsmen during an attack at munga lelau in karim lamido lga of taraba state on friday

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Gunmen last Friday launched a deadly attack on the Munga Lelau community in the Karim Lamido Local Government Area of Taraba State, killing over 30 people and razing numerous houses and food stores worth several millions of naira.

Although some parts of the local government have recently witnessed recurring communal clashes between farmers and herders, Friday's incident was described as the worst in recent memory.

Fulani herdsmen were accused of orchestrating the attack and killing innocent civilians. However, Fulani pastoralists claimed they were also victims of violent assaults allegedly carried out by farming communities.

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The attack caught residents by surprise, as the assailants reportedly arrived on motorcycles and invaded the village from multiple directions around 2:30 p.m.

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In addition to the more than 30 people killed, several homes were burnt, forcing hundreds of residents to flee for safety.

Neighbouring villages also came under attack. While no official casualty figures have been released from those areas, sources said many people were killed or injured.

A survivor of the horrific attack described the experience as “a nightmare in broad daylight.” He recounted how the assailants stormed the community on motorcycles, opened fire indiscriminately, set homes ablaze, and left the entire village in ruins.

It was further gathered that the attackers struck Munga Lelau while security operatives were stationed in Bandawa, another community recently affected by similar violence.

By the time security forces arrived in Munga Lelau from Bandawa, over 20 lifeless bodies had been counted, and scores of residents had sustained gunshot wounds.

The victims were buried in a mass grave on Saturday, under the watchful presence of soldiers and police officers deployed to the area. The community was enveloped in smoke and sorrow.

Before the Friday, May 23 attack on Munga Lelau, numerous incidents of attacks and reprisal assaults had been recorded in Bandawa, Munga, and Fulani settlements in the area, resulting in multiple fatalities.

The Public Relations Officer of the Bandawa community, Mr Joachim Dangana, described the incident as deeply regrettable.

He noted that the Fulani and Bandawa people have historically enjoyed a peaceful coexistence.

He stressed the need for reconciliation to restore lasting peace between the Fulani and Bandawa communities.

He said Taraba State needs peace more than ever, especially as Governor Agbu Kefas is making significant efforts to attract both local and international investors to the state.

Isa Ahmed, who spoke on behalf of the Fulani community, also condemned the crisis, stating that progress and development cannot occur in the absence of peace.

He alleged that Fulani communities had suffered repeated attacks from Munga and Bandawa residents, with over 30 Fulani, including women and youths, reportedly killed.

He added that more than 35 Fulani individuals were injured in separate assaults, and hundreds of cows belonging to pastoralists were killed or rustled.

“Our voices are not heard, our complaints are ignored, and yet we are labelled as the aggressors,” he said.

Findings by *Daily Trust* revealed that hundreds of farmers from across Nigeria typically migrate to Karim Lamido Local Government Area annually for dry-season rice farming.

However, the communal conflicts have forced many to abandon the area in favour of safer, less volatile areas for irrigation farming.

How the attack happened – Police

The Taraba State Police Command confirmed the attack on the Munga Lelau community.

The Police Public Relations Officer, SP James Lashen, in a statement, said the violence began around 2:30 p.m. on Friday, when a 15-year-old boy, Isah Ishaku, was reportedly macheted while working on his family's farm.

“Shortly after, armed herders mobilised on motorcycles and attacked Magami and Munga Lelau, setting houses ablaze and killing several persons,” he said.

SP Lashen further disclosed that a joint police team, led by the Divisional Police Officer, was ambushed at the scene but successfully repelled the attackers, who fled into the bush, abandoning one of their motorcycles.

Reacting to the incident, Taraba State governor, Dr Agbu Kefas, condemned the killings in the strongest terms, describing the violence as “horrendous and unacceptable.”

In a statement issued by his media aide, Emmanuel Bello, the governor expressed deep condolences to the families of the victims and assured residents that his administration would remain steadfast in protecting lives and property.

The Taraba State chapter of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), led by Rev. Fr. Dr. Williams Awoshiri, has strongly condemned the recent wave of violence and killings in several

communities in Karim Lamido LGA.

In a statement issued in Jalingo, Rev. Fr. Awoshiri stressed the need for intensified actions to apprehend the perpetrators and restore lasting peace.

He called for justice and a united response that prioritizes the safety and well-being of all citizens, irrespective of ethnic or religious affiliation.

The CAN chairman urged community leaders, stakeholders, and government authorities to embrace dialogue as a path to reconciliation and lasting harmony.

Army holds stakeholders' engagements

Prior to Friday's attack, efforts were underway by local stakeholders and security chiefs to promote peaceful coexistence among the Bandawa, Munga, and Fulani communities in Karim Lamido LGA.

As part of the military's ongoing non-kinetic peace strategy, the Commander of the 6 Brigade Nigerian Army / Sector 3 Operation Whirl Stroke (OPWS), Brigadier General Kingsley Chidiebere Uwa, held a series of strategic stakeholder engagements across Ardo-Kola, Lau, and Karim-Lamido LGAs.

The first session took place on May 14, 2025, at the Ardo-Kola Local Government Secretariat, where Brigadier General Uwa met with the LGA chairman, Zakari Ismail, alongside opinion leaders, elders, and youth representatives.

The discussions focused on strengthening communal bonds, improving early warning mechanisms, and deepening cooperation with security agencies.

The second phase, held from May 15 to 16 at the 6 Brigade Headquarters conference room in Jalingo, brought together representatives from the Bandawa, Munga, and Fulani communities of

Karim Lamido.

The session followed a recent violent clash between farmers and herders, which led to the loss of lives and the displacement of families now residing at an IDP camp in Lau LGA.

Several resolutions were adopted, including preparations for a formal peace accord to be signed in the coming week.

Findings revealed a growing sense of fear among residents, discouraging many from going to their farms or engaging in fishing activities, even though the cropping season has already begun.

Mr John Adamu, a resident of Karim Lamido town, said many locals are distressed as their homeland increasingly resembles a war zone.

He lamented the history of recurring ethnic clashes in the area, citing past crises involving the Wulkum and Fulani, Wulkum and Karimjo, Wulkum and Shomo, and most recently, the Munga, Bandawa, and Fulani communities.

Taraba's recurring communal clashes

Taraba State has experienced repeated and deadly communal clashes over the past years, often rooted in disputes over land, traditional leadership, and resource control.

In April 2020, a violent conflict between the Shomo and Jole ethnic groups in Lau LGA left 25 people dead and many injured. Around 100 houses were razed, with residents blaming a dispute over ancestral fish ponds.

The following month, eight people were killed and homes destroyed in Bali LGA as tensions escalated between the Ichen and Tiv communities from Donga LGA.

In January 2022, 10 people died during a clash between the Ichen and Ndaka in Bissaula, in Kurmi LGA, following a contested attempt to install a village head.

Despite a commission of inquiry into Ichen-Ndaka hostilities in Kurmi LGA, violence continued. In March 2022, three policemen and an elderly woman were killed by armed militiamen in Bissaula, and properties worth millions were destroyed.

Further unrest occurred in May 2023 when eight people died in a conflict between the Karimjo and Wurkum ethnic groups in Karim Lamido LGA, triggered by a succession dispute.

In the same month, violence also broke out in Takum LGA between the Kutep and Hausa communities, resulting in four deaths and widespread tension.

In July 2023, Governor Agbu Kefas imposed a 24-hour curfew on Karim Lamido following another Karimjo-Wurkum clash that claimed about 50 lives.

Most recently, in November 2024, four individuals were killed in a clash between herders and farmers in the Bambur community of Karim Lamido LGA. The conflict began as a land dispute and quickly escalated into violence.