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13 die in renewed violence in Jos

THURSDAY, 18 MARCH 2010 16:59 FROM ISA ABDULSALAMI, JOS NEWS - NATIONAL



◦ Fulani herdsmen attack village

DESPITE the military presence and the curfew in force, Fulani herdsmen and men reportedly in the uniforms of the Military Task Force stole into another Jos village in the wee hours of yesterday to kill a fresh batch of victims.

Most of the victims, just like it occurred 10 days ago, were women and children. One of them was a pregnant woman with a baby strapped to her back.

All the three were killed. The woman's belly was ripped open and the foetus, the third victim, removed. All the three were also burnt.

According to the Chairman of Riyom Local Council, Mr. Simon Wadkwon, though he informed the military and the police about the attack, help came too late.

The federal authorities have been accused of encouraging a culture of impunity by failing to punish those arrested over previous killings in Jos and other northern states.

Survivors said Fulani herdsmen and some people wearing the current uniforms of the Military Task Force carried out the attack at about 1.30 a.m. yesterday.

The attack on Byei village is coming 10 days after suspected armed Fulani herdsmen attacked four villages in Jos South and Barkin Ladi local council areas in which many people, mostly women and children, were killed.

Thirteen dead bodies were physically counted, five were injured and are receiving treatment at the Vom Christian Hospital, while some people are still missing.

Three males, six females and four children were physically counted among the slain people.

Majority of the victims bore machete wounds while only one victim's stomach was pierced by a bullet. After the bullet, the attackers still went ahead to slice his head.

The Fulani attackers were very careful this time. They did not carry out much burning not to attract attention from the military. They conducted the attack violently but quietly.

Commenting on the incident, a member representing that constituency in the State House of Assembly, Mr. Emmanuel Jugu, said that "enough is enough", adding that his people had resolved that they would not observe the curfew hours.

"They said they have been law-abiding and observing the curfew, yet they would be attacked by the Fulani, even in the presence of the military. My people no longer have confidence in the military. They have told me that they would resort to defending themselves as the military cannot protect and defend them", he said.

The Special Adviser to the Governor on Media and Public Affairs, Mr. Dan Manjang, who spoke in a similar vein, said the attack took place during curfew hours, adding that the confidence of the people in the military had been eroded. "People are saying that they no longer have confidence in the military curfew," he said.

Wadkwon said the happening yesterday was a confirmation of the people's apprehension that the Fulani had concluded plans to launch another brutal attack on them. The Commissioner of Police, Ikechukwu Aduba, was sighted there but did not go into the field where the casualties were littered. He refused to talk to journalists.

Jugu later fully granted an on-the-spot interview with journalists. According to him: "Well, if I say that today is the darkest day in my life I have ever seen in Riyom, it will be an understatement because what I see with my eyes is beyond imagination. In fact, I was sleeping in my house when people woke me up at about 1.30 a.m. When I woke up and I heard sporadic gunshots all over the place, we were crying. I called the Speaker, Istifanus Mwansat, the Speaker called the security men in Jos and I think the soldiers were drafted there.

"Then after some time, they brought a girl whose stomach had been scattered by bullets. So, I had to take her to Vom Hospital. And there, they immediately removed the bullets. Apart from her, there were about four other people that were taken to Vom Hospital for treatment.

"And when I came back, what I saw was beyond imagination. This is callous. And what my people are saying is that there is no need for soldiers to be in our midst because we have security men almost around this place in four locations, but it is surprising that this attack took place and nobody was arrested and no soldier was seen at the scene of the crisis.

"But in the interview I had with the residents, they told me that they saw with their naked eyes soldiers in uniform and the Fulani. So, we are having doubts in the security now. It is left to the state government and the Federal Government to sit

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