



59 feared killed in fresh Nasarawa violence

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- APC cautions against extension of emergency rule
- NEF, Muslim group, others differ over Nyako's allegation

THERE seems to be no end yet to the orgy of violence sweeping across the North Central part of Nigeria as about 59 gruesomely murdered people have been discovered in wells and shallow graves in various places in Igga, Nasarawa Eggon council of Nasarawa State following a lingering violence in the area between the Eggon and Gwandara ethnic groups.

In a related development, the All Progressives Congress (APC) has said the consequences of any plan to extend emergency rule in three north east states where there is insurgency may not be in the interest of people that are meant to be protected or that of the country.

In the same vein, the chairman, Northern Elders Forum (NEF), Prof. Ango Abdullahi has urged the Federal Government to investigate the issue of alleged genocide against the North raised by the Adamawa State Governor, Admiral Murtala Nyako, rather than condemning the claim.

Meanwhile, Muslim students in the 19 Northern states and Abuja, under the umbrella of Muslim Student Society (MSSN) have backed Nyako for confronting the Federal Government over the security challenges in the north.

But a group, Save Adamawa State Movement (SASM), has called for Nyako's resignation over his indictment by the expanded national security meeting that took place last week, saying it brought shame to the State.

Similarly, the President General of the Trade Union Congress (TUC), Bala Kiagama Bobboi, has canvassed community policing to check insecurity in the country just as the Ilorin Emirate Descendants Progressive Union (IEDPU) has appealed to security agents to intensify efforts at addressing various security challenges.

Also, the General Evangelist of the Christ Apostolic Church (CAC), Prophet Kayode Abiara has called on Nigerians to engage in fervent prayers to stop the increasing criminal activities in the country.

Top government functionaries who pleaded anonymity told The Guardian Sunday in Lafia that it took the intervention of some highly placed people of Eggon extraction to remove some of the corpses from the affected community following the refusal of Eggon youths to allow security operatives access to the troubled places.

45 dead bodies had been discovered Saturday, following intense fighting which began on Friday, government and security sources said.

Igga is a community located in Nasarawa Eggon which is the traditional headquarters of the Eggon speaking people of the state which has continued to experience violence since the return of civil rule in the country in 1999.

The latest crises, according to the police, erupted as a result of tussle over a piece of land allegedly owned by a Gwandara indigene which was encroached upon by an Eggon person following which an argument ensued resulting in the killings.

Homes especially those belonging to the Gwandara people have been completely deserted with some burnt down even as economic trees in the area have been cut down, with farms destroyed.

Sources pointed accusation fingers on Ombatse, a renowned cult group for carrying out the mayhem against the Gwandara people who are just a fraction in the whole of Nasarawa State.

However, at an emergency security meeting convened at the Government House Lafia yesterday, both the governor and the security chiefs were silent on who is actually behind the latest uprising.

Before the meeting went into a closed door session, Governor Tanko Al-Makura explained that the essence of the meeting was to appraise the security situation in the state with emphasis on the latest violence to enable the necessary action to be immediately taken.

According to the governor, the meeting was also aimed at discussing issues relating to the deliberations of the northern governors forum last week with particular concern about the farmers/herdsmen clashes so as to give some citizens in the state some form of confidence about their safety.

Briefing reporters shortly after the closed door session, the State Commissioner of Police, Ibrahim Idris, announced that the governor was urgently going to meet with President Goodluck Jonathan in Abuja to discuss issues relating with the latest uprising.

He also said the inventory of the dead and property destroyed was still being taken by security authorities and would be made available to the public at the appropriate time, calling on the public to support the security agencies with information.

He added that all necessary measures were being put in place to return the displaced people.

The Gwandara had just returned to their homes a month ago having fled Igga two-years ago following an earlier conflict that forced them out of the place.

Speaking with journalists after the conduct of APC Kwara State congress in Ilorin at the weekend, the interim National Publicity Secretary of the party, Lai Mohammed, “you can’t fight insurgency without democratic structure being in place.

“The extension of emergency rule is between the President and the National Assembly. President cannot declare emergency rule without securing two-third majority of the National Assembly and there are certain issues to be considered by the National Assembly before they would grant the extension.

“What is more worrisome is the call by some people to the effect that some democratic structures in the states should be dismantled and the governors sacked. The question is when and how did governors become impediment to fighting insurgency?

“On the contrary, you can’t fight insurgency without democratic structures being in place. I hope that those who are trying to stampede the President on extension or sacking of governors should have a rethink, because if they do, the consequences will not be in the interest of the people you want to protect or that of the country”, he said.

He advised Federal Government to reach out to the affected governors as the number one stakeholders in any state.

Speaking on the letter written by Nyako of Adamawa State on prevalent insurgency in the area, Mohammed said the governor was not speaking for the APC.

“I think people are getting it wrong. Nyako as governor and leader of the North, expressed his views on what he perceived is going on. When did that one become a party matter? The issue of condemnation or not, let’s take a look at the issue and message he said. I have read the letter. He’s making certain allegations and those allegations he believes them and proffered solutions to issues raised. Nyako was not speaking for APC. He was speaking as a governor and the letter was not addressed to APC, but to northern governors”, he said.

Abdullahi said the action of the Federal Government following Nyako's allegation indicated that there was a hidden agenda being nursed by the President Goodluck Jonathan –led administration.

Besides, speaking in an interview with journalists in Kaduna at the weekend, the NEF chairman pointed out that, “to me, as a Governor of Adamawa State, Nyako is in a position to have some privileged information that could have made him to make such statement but rather than people addressing the serious allegation, they have resorted to abusing and condemning him.”

Zone A Coordinator and Vice National Amir of MSSN, Malam Yusuf Yakubu Arrigasiyyu yesterday, at the 60th anniversary of the Society, expressed disappointment over the attitude of some northern leaders on the current security challenges confronting the north.

Arrigasiyyu said that Nyako has raised a fundamental issue that needed to be addressed, noting that, it is painful that all governors in the region have risen against him forgetting that Governor Kashim Shettima of Borno State made a similar comment over poor approach to the insecurity in the north.

The SASM also called for the imposition of full scale state of emergency in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states in which the governors would be removed to allow the military gain total control without political interference.

In a statement by SASM's National President, Stephen Albert at the end of its meeting in Abuja yesterday, said the indictment of Nyako did not come to its members as a surprise, having lived with him as governor in the last eight years.

The IEDPU President, Alhaji Abdul-Hameed Adi, made the appeal while addressing journalists during the launching of the Union's magazine, “The Emirate Voice”, at the Union's secretariat in Ilorin.

Bobboi, who said this to journalists yesterday in his home town Kakara immediately after his turbaning as the Tafidan Sardauana, called on the relevant authorities to encourage community police, as it would go a long way to reduce the security challenges presently confronting the country.

In his sermon at a prayer conference organised by the Treasure House of God Church, Abeokuta, Ogun State, Abiara noted with concern that kidnapping and other related crimes were becoming a general trend in the country and enjoined Nigerians to be more prayerful and also vigilant.