
39 feared killed by military drone, invasion in Adamawa, Plateau

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•Amnesty International indicts Air Force over killings

No fewer than 39 people have been feared killed and 51 others seriously injured following Nigerian Air Force's (NAF) launching of fighter jets that fired rockets in Lawaru, Dong, Kodomti, Shafaron and Nzuruwei villages in Adamawa State. Sequel to this development, hundreds of herdsmen attacked at least five villages in the state to avenge the massacre of up to 51 of their members.

Amnesty International (AI) disclosed this yesterday, accusing the NAF of inadequate and ineffective response to communal violence, in spite of its several warnings to deter spiraling communal violence in the state and elsewhere. An AI team visited the villages in the aftermath of the air raids and gathered witnesses' testimonies from residents who said they were attacked by a fighter jet and military helicopter, as they attempted to flee.

Director of AI Nigeria, Osai Ojigho, condemned the launching of air raids, which he said was not a legitimate law enforcement method by any standard. "Such reckless use of deadly force is unlawful, outrageous and lays bare the Nigerian military's shocking disregard for the lives of those it supposedly exists to protect," he added.

"The government must totally overturn its response to these deadly clashes to avoid this crisis getting out of control. They need to investigate and bring suspects to justice." Hundreds of people lost their lives last year, and the government is still not



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doing enough to protect communities from these violent clashes. Worse, the killers are getting away with murder.

“In some cases where the Nigerian security agencies respond to communal violence, they used excessive or unlawful force resulting in even more deaths and destruction,” Ojigho stated. But NAF Director of Public Relations, Air Commodore Olatokunbo Adesanya, described the air raid as “warning shots—not shots to kill.” He said they alerted people to flee the area and that they had had a positive effect.



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Amnesty International, however, pointed out that two weeks after the incident Adesanya revised the account, adding that herdsmen had opened fire on the aircraft. “Adesanya was also quoted as saying that the air force recorded video footage of the operations, which involved an Alpha Jet and an EC 135 helicopter,” the body alleged.

Consequently, AI is calling on the NAF, which has received intensive training from the United Kingdom and United State militaries in recent years –to hand over the footage of the incident and all relevant information to the authorities, including the Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice for investigation.

Meanwhile, suspected herdsmen yesterday killed four persons in three villages of Bassa Local Council in Plateau State. One was at Nkiedoro where one person was murdered and houses razed. In another attack, about seven kilometers of vegetable farms were mowed down near Rafin Bauna village and three people were slaughtered.

An eyewitness identified as Masarawa Kim Usman, said the attackers carried out their onslaught in a command manner with astute perfection and precision, usually displayed by trained musketeers. National President of Irigwe Development Association (IDA) confirmed the incident, saying that people in the locality could no longer sleep with their eyes closed.

He said some people kept night vigil yesterday because of rumours of attacks, which unfortunately came to pass yesterday morning. The Special Task Force (STF) called Operation Safe Haven (OPSH) called an emergency meeting yesterday involving Miango Community of Bassa, Fulani Leaders and Plateau Building Agency in Jos.



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