

Jos in 24-hour shutdown after fresh attack leaves 36 dead, houses burnt

- Youths storm Assembly, Govt House with victims' bodies
- Lalong updates Buhari, says all culprits must face justice
- Declare state of emergency in Northern Nigeria, says Zamfara gov
- Presidency accuses Ortom of inciting ethnic, religious hatred
- Igbo youths condemn attacks, seeks Buhari's resignation

From **Isa Abdulsalami Ahovi** (Jos), **Lawrence Njoku** (Enugu) and **Terhemba Daka** (Abuja)

HOURS after President Muhammadu Buhari met behind closed doors with Governor Simon Lalong of Plateau State in the Presidential Villa, Abuja, some

gunmen, on Tuesday night, turned the state to a theatre of war, as they attacked Yelwan Zangam community, close to the permanent site of the University of Jos (UNI-JOS), killing about 36 people and burning houses.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Jos youths storm Assembly, Govt House with victims' bodies

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The attack occurred around 9:00 p.m. despite the dusk to dawn curfew imposed in Jos North council as well as Jos South and Bassa council areas. The attackers shot sporadically, gunning down fleeing residents and burning some others in their homes.

Before the incident, the fragile bridge linking the community to other communities was destroyed to prevent help from coming to the people.

During a visit to the State Specialist Hospital yesterday, no fewer than 16 bodies were at the morgue, while the injured were receiving treatment. According to eyewitnesses, the bodies at the funeral parlour did not include another set of more than 15 that were burnt in their houses and were yet to be evacuated.

The Councillor for Ahwol Ward in the community, Yusuf Ali, said that people were burnt alive in the affected area.

According to the Councillor, the gunmen first vandalised the iron bridge linking the

community before attacking the people, which made it difficult for security agents to assess the area when they were contacted.

Another resident, Jeremiah Bulus, said, "corpses have been taken to the mortuary this morning and people are still making efforts to recover more corpses from several houses, which the gunmen also set ablaze. The situation is really bad for the people."

Speaking to State House correspondents at the end of the meeting with President Buhari, the governor had said he updated him on the security developments in Plateau.

"I made a request to the President about relief materials and also re-echoed the issue of resettlement of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). We have a lot of IDPs in my state, we have a lot on our hands already and when such happens, you expect the state to seek support for relief materials," he said.

He had noted that the security situation in the state had greatly improved and very soon, the curfew imposed on troubled areas will be further relaxed.

But sooner had he returned that the fragile peace was broken again by Tuesday's attack. Earlier, state governments have been sending buses to evacuate their students from UNIJOS in droves.

Vexed by the latest assault, a group of young persons stormed the Plateau Specialist Hospital, where bodies of victims had been deposited and evacuated them into vans. They later proceeded with the bodies to the state's House of Assembly, blocking all roads leading to the complex.

The Speaker, Abok Ayuba, called for calm and restraint over the attack. Abok, who condoled with families of the victims, appealed to them not to take laws into their hands, saying that such action would only aggravate the already bad situation.

"We are all affected by what is happening in Plateau, but please, calm down as the government is doing everything possible to end the killings. We are your representatives, we are going to follow up with relevant authorities to ensure that peace returns to the state," he said.

Despite the address by the

Speaker, the youth were not satisfied and they proceeded to the Government House where the bodies of the victims were laid.

In the meantime, authorities in Plateau have summoned an emergency security council meeting presided by the deputy governor, Prof. Sonni Tyoden, to discuss the current situation in the state.

The latest attack is coming days after Governor Lalong imposed a curfew on Jos North, Bassa, and Jos South local councils following an attack on Rukuba Road in Jos North, where 23 people who were travelling from Bauchi en-route Jos to Ikare in Ondo State were killed and 23 others were left injured.

At noon yesterday, the Plateau State government or-

dered a reinstatement of the 24-hour curfew earlier relaxed in Jos North. The 24-hour curfew came into force from 4:00 p.m. yesterday. The government said the decision is a proactive one aimed at nipping further attacks and reprisals in the bud.

Read the remaining part of this story on www.guardian.ng



Nigerian Ambassador to Russia, Prof. Abdullahi Shehu (left); Minister of Defence, Major-General Bashir Magashi (rtd); Defence Adviser, Nigerian Embassy Moscow, Air Vice Marshal Olatokunbo Adesanya and Chief of the Naval Staff, Vice Admiral Awwal Gambo at the International Military-Technical Forum "Army-2021" in Russia...yesterday.