

National

Mutfwang urges vigilance as fresh attacks claim 13 lives on the Plateau

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Plateau State governor Caleb Mutfwang

- Urges Security Onslaught On Perpetrators
- Intensify Your Efforts, OPSH Commander Charges Troops

Plateau State Governor, Caleb Mutfwang, has again condemned in strong terms the renewed deadly attacks that have claimed several lives and property in

Kopnanle community in Mangu and Mandarshar village of Bokkos local councils of the state.

No fewer than 13 people were slaughtered in the area on the night of Friday, April 12, 2024. Confirming the incident in a statement yesterday, the Chairman of the Bokkos Cultural Development Council (BCDC) Vanguard, Farmasum Fuddang, said that under the cover of darkness, more than 50 armed “Fulani terrorists” descended on the villages of Mandung-Mushu and Kopnanle, targeting innocent, unarmed and peaceful residents as they slept.

Fuddang added that the assailants set fire on homes and a place of worship, mercilessly gunning down fleeing civilians.

He alleged that the nearby soldiers failed to intervene effectively.

“This brazen attack, which predominantly targeted children, appears to be part of a calculated effort to instill fear and perpetrate further displacement within our communities. We condemn this act of terror, which we believe is aligned with a broader agenda to impose Sharia law and seize control of our lands.

“Just hours before this tragedy unfolded, BCDC Vanguard submitted a petition to the Department of State Services (DSS), challenging a leaked memo that falsely accused our people of planning violence against Fulani residents. We unequivocally stated that the intelligence behind the memo was fabricated and defamatory.

“Despite our efforts to rectify these falsehoods, the security apparatus failed to protect our community from the very threats we highlighted. We are appalled by the apparent prioritisation of the lives of Fulani residents over our own and demand answers from the authorities,” he said.

He said that the timing of the attack, following closely on the heels of the DSS’ erroneous warning of an impending assault on Fulani communities, raises serious concerns about collusion or deliberate neglect.

“We refuse to accept such injustice and demand immediate transparency and accountability. This is more so that advance notices of attack in the area were

published and circulated at least a week prior to the so-called DSS intelligence. The DSS ignored these warnings and instead chose to implicate the victims despite acknowledging in their memo that the Fulani were responsible for the six-day attack that claimed over 300 of our members last Christmas,” he said.

Attempts to get the reaction of the police to the incident through the State Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), DSP Alfred Alabo, proved abortive as his phone was permanently switched off. Even a text message sent to his phone had not dropped as of press time.

However, Governor Mutfwang has described the attacks as unfortunate and unacceptable, especially now that the government is diligently working to restore peace and security and facilitate the return of displaced persons to their homes.

A statement yesterday by the Director of Press and Public Affairs to the governor



returning as the government is determined to bring them out to face justice.

While appreciating the intervention of security agencies in the protection of lives and property in the state, Mutfwang urged them to redouble their efforts in discharging their constitutional responsibility of protecting innocent communities.

The governor expressed deep sympathy to the bereaved families and the affected communities and prayed for quick healing of those who sustained gunshot injuries. He called on community stakeholders across the state to activate dispute resolution mechanisms in tackling issues of disagreement and report without delay, early warning signs to constituted authorities for prompt intervention.

Mutfwang urged vigilance and fostering of inter-community relations by residents of the state, particularly now that the rainy season is gearing up to ensure a safer and successful farming period.

Meanwhile, the Commander, Operation Safe Haven (OPSH) in Plateau State and the General Officer Commanding 3 Division of the Nigerian Army, Major General Abdulsalam Abubakar, has told the joint security forces in the state to intensify efforts to completely eradicate all acts of isolated killings, kidnapping, farmers-

herders clashes, cattle rustling as well as cattle poisoning, crop destruction and ethno-religious crisis among other forms of security threats in the state.

Abubakar urged them not to rest on their oars but to remain focused in their task and consolidate the gains of all their recent achievements. He spoke at the OPSH headquarters while hosting the combatant soldiers to a Sallah luncheon. He reassured the soldiers that the OPSH leadership as well as the Defence Headquarters would do all that are necessary to provide them with the requisite leadership, welfare and logistics to motivate them for effective and successful conduct of their operations.

The commander encouraged the soldiers to always remember their gallant departed colleagues who paid the ultimate sacrifice in the discharge of their duties.

“Specifically, last month alone, three of our colleagues – two Senior Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) and one police inspector – were gruesomely murdered while discharging their constitutional mandate between Mangu and Barkin Ladi local councils.

“I have sworn not to rest until all those responsible are brought to justice. And thankfully, we have recovered their weapons and already arrested most of the perpetrators that are responsible, some as far away as Bauchi. Like I always say, you can only run but you cannot hide. We will get you,” he added. He charged all the soldiers to remain disciplined, loyal, vigilant and professional in the conduct of their operations.

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