

## Fresh Plateau onslaught claims 20, injures several

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### • 107 victims of Benue attack still hospitalised, SEMA confirms

No fewer than 20 people were on Monday night killed by gunmen, who invaded the Bindi community in Ta-Hoss district of Riyom Local Council of Plateau State.

An unspecified number of others were injured as residents fled for safety.

Chairman of Riyom council area, Bature Shuwa, acknowledged the incident, but could not give the casualty figure, saying he was on his way to the attacked community.

Also confirming the killings was the National President of the Berom Youth Moulders Association, Dalyop Solomon.

According to him, the gunmen, suspected to be members of the Fulani ethnic group, stormed the community, shooting sporadically and setting several houses ablaze.

“Twenty-seven persons were killed, and many were injured. We have taken the bodies to different hospitals before the burial,” Solomon said.

In a statement yesterday jointly signed by Chairman and Publicity Secretary of the Riyom chapter of the Coalition for the Protection of Democracy (COPDEM), Gideon Manjal and Gadu Daniel Dong, the assailants stormed the village when the people had retired for the night, and carried out a house-to-house search, killing innocent people, including women, children and the aged in the process.

The statement said the attackers, who were identified by survivors as Fulani militias, were heavily armed and made it clear that their mission was to exterminate the people and take over their land.

It read: “The attackers, who were properly identified as Fulani extremists by survivors, stormed the Bindi community in Ta-Hoss district of Riyom Local Government Area on Monday night and, in their regular pattern of attack which is consistent with several previous attacks across Riyom and other parts of Plateau, systematically slaughtered over 20 innocent people including women, children, and old people.

“This assault occurred despite the visible presence of security forces in and around the area, including armoured military assets. Homes were burned, families displaced and trauma deepened.”

According to the statement, “It must be clearly stated that these attackers are not unknown. Their hideouts and base settlements in nearby enclaves have been repeatedly identified and reported by community leaders and local authorities.

“Yet, year after year, these known threats continue to strike with impunity, often unchallenged. The recurring nature of these atrocities points not only to a failure of protection, but raises grave questions about inaction, negligence, and systemic compromise.”

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The group called on President Bola Tinubu, the Plateau State government, and security agencies to order a high-level intervention and military operation to dismantle the known terrorist enclaves, as well as declare a state of emergency in the affected areas, and provide direct humanitarian relief, community rebuilding efforts and trauma support.

Contacted for comments, the Acting Director of Information, 3 Division of the Nigerian Army at Rukuba Barracks, Lt.-Col. Aliyu Danja asked The Guardian to contact the Media Information Officer of Operation Safe Haven (OPSH), Major Samson Zhakom, for confirmation.

But attempts to reach him were futile, as his phone was switched off.

However, a senior military officer, who pleaded anonymity, said they were at the scene of the attack.

REACTING, the Senator representing Plateau North, Pam Dachungyang, has condemned the recent killings in some parts of his constituency, particularly in Jol, Rim, and Jebu villages.

He described the attacks, which have claimed over 30 lives, as “an indictment on all of us”, and called for urgent action to stop the violence.

In a statement yesterday by his media aide, Eric Dung, the lawmaker noted that the situation in Jebu village was akin to a war situation, with innocent villagers being targeted.

He expressed concern that the attacks are affecting the livelihoods of the people, particularly farmers, and urged the National Assembly to take practical steps to address the issue.

SIMILARLY, the Executive Secretary of Benue State Emergency Management Agency, James Iorpuu, yesterday, disclosed that 107 victims of the June 13 Yelwata attack in the Guma council area of the state are still hospitalised and receiving treatment for injuries sustained during the onslaught.

Iorpuu, who doubles as Permanent Secretary of the Benue State Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management, stated this in Makurdi when he interacted with journalists alongside his counterparts from Nasarawa and Plateau states.

He decried the incessant attacks on rural communities in the state, stating that the level of carnage in Yelwata was massive.

Iorpuu said: “So far, 107 survivors of the Yelwata attack are still receiving treatment at the Benue State University Teaching Hospital (BSUTH), Makurdi and other hospitals in that attack that claimed over 200 lives.”