

# Residents Flee Jos City

**ONOJA AUDU**

JOS

**T**here was confusion and fear of more attacks in Jos City, Plateau State, on Wednesday after gunmen killed more than 63 persons and burnt several houses in Yelwa Zangam village, Jos North Local Government Area

- After Gunmen Killed More Than 63 People, Burnt Houses
- Mourners Take Victims' Bodies To Assembly, Security Council
- Plateau Govt Re-Imposes 24-Hour Curfew On Jos North

of the state, Tuesday night, in what analysts see as a reprisal attack.

The confusion created by the

heinous killing, where people scampered for safety, resulted in serious traffic gridlock in the city of Jos as

many people fled for their lives.

This is coming barely one week after about 22 travelers were killed

in Gada-Biyu-Rukuba Road also in

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Jos North LGA.

A resident of Yelwa Zangam village said vigilante members had reported recovering 63 bodies, with many of them burnt beyond recognition.

According to the resident: "The attackers are Fulani terrorists who came in large numbers, despite the ongoing curfew." He noted that he was among those lucky to escape the attack.

"More bodies are being discovered and everyone in the community has fled to neighbouring villages for fear of further attacks," residents said.

The crisis has led to the closure of University of Jos, while several state governors are currently evacuating their citizens from the state.

Meanwhile, Plateau State government has reinstated the 24-hour curfew earlier relaxed in Jos North Local Government Area of the state following the recent killings.

According to Governor Simon Lalong, the 24-hour curfew came into force from 4p.m, Wednesday, August 25, 2021, until further notice.

The proactive decision became necessary following eminent threat to lives and property within the local government area and the need to forestall further breakdown of law and order.

The 24-hour curfew, the governor said, will also enable security agencies deploy appropriately to maintain se-

curity as the search for the attackers of the villagers continues.

Governor Lalong appealed to citizens of Jos North to cooperate with the government by abiding to the 24-hour curfew, saying security men have been mandated to ensure that those who violate the curfew are arrested.

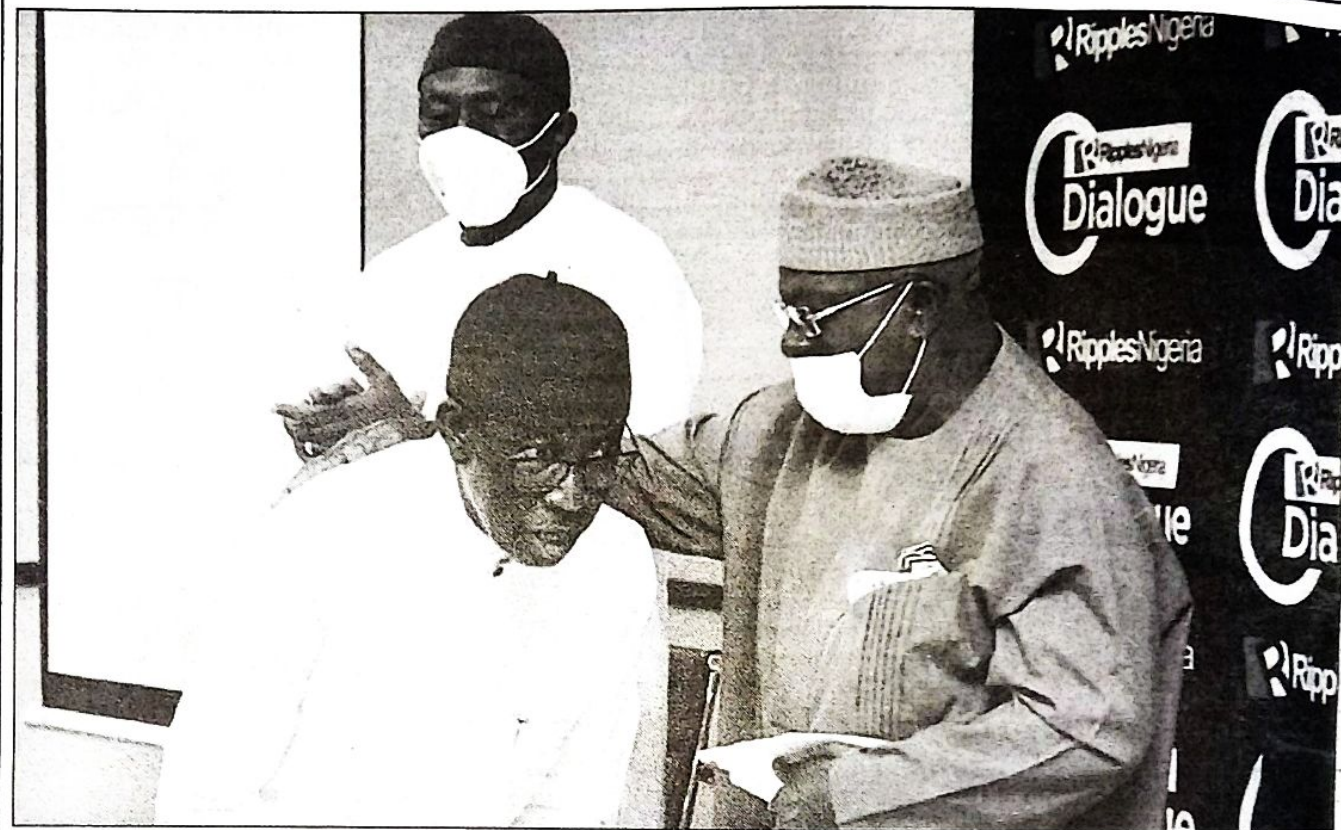
Also, the 6p.m to 6a.m curfew in Jos South and Bassa LGAs still remains in place until further notice.

"Only people on essential duties such as health personnel, journalists, fire service, para-military and others are to be exempted from the curfew but should carry means of identification with them at all times", the governor said.

Governor Lalong called for calm and again sympathised with the victims, but wants them to show restraint and allow government to handle the matter to disallow hoodlums from taking advantage of the unfortunate situation to cause mayhem and destruction in the state.

Before Lalong renewed the 24-hour curfew on Jos North LGA on Wednesday, families of the victims carried the coffins of their dead relations and parents in a long convoy to the premises of Plateau House Assembly to draw the attention of the state lawmakers.

They also carried the coffins in a long convoy to Government House for the attention of the State Security Council meeting that



Ifeanyi Okowa, Governor, Delta State (left); Ayo Adebajo, Afenifere Leader (right), and Uche Onyeagocha, former member of House of Representatives, during the annual lecture and symposium organised by Ripples Centre for Data and Investigative Journalism in Lagos on Wednesday.

was called at the instance of Deputy Governor Sonie Tyoden, who was holding brief for Lalong who was in Abuja for a meeting with President Muhammadu Buhari.

Members of the community cried to the Assembly and urged it to liaise with other arms of government to tackle the menace.

Responding, the Speaker of the Assembly, Ayuba Abok, called for calm and restraint.

Abok condoled with the families of the victims and appealed to them not to take laws into their hands, say-

ing such an act 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.

Business activities in Jos City was also paralysed by noon as soldiers in pickup vans were seen shooting into the air to prevent hoodlums

from looting shops.

Governor Lalong had in a statement by his Director of Press and Public Affairs, Dr. Makut Simon Macham, condemned the barbaric act, and directed security agencies who had already arrested 10 suspects in connection with the attack to intensify efforts in tracking down the other assailants and their sponsors in order to bring them to justice.

The statement said Lalong was furious over the incident which security reports indicated was carefully planned as the bridge linking Yelwa

Zangam village was said to have been destroyed in order to deny security forces access to the area during the attack.

The governor sympathised with the affected people and called for calm, assuring them that they will get justice.

"Mr. Lalong again warns criminals that they will be pursued, arrested and dealt with, no matter how long it takes, as his administration will not allow the reign of terror to persist and rubbish all the investments made in restoring calm in the state", Macham said.