

No fewer than eight people are feared dead in yesterday's attempt by suspected Ombatse militiamen to attack the palace of the Emir of Lafia, Alhaji. Dr. Isah Mustapha Agwai I, CFR.

The Ombatse gunmen, who attempted to make their way through the Bukan Fadama axis to the palace, started shooting as they advanced, killing three persons in the process.

Youths around the palace, however, mobilised themselves and launched a counter-offensive which culminated in an exchange of gunfire that lasted over 45 minutes.

The Ombatse militiamen were said to have fled after they reportedly ran low on ammunition, but the angry youths gave chase, caught five of them and dispatched them to the world beyond.

As if that was not enough, a young man who claimed he was in the palace to see the emir was yesterday burnt to death and his chest ripped apart by the angry mob when it was discovered that he had a gun on him. They suspected that he was on a mission to kill the royal father.

Scores killed, others injured in Nasarawa inter-ethnic clashes

Barely a day after Nasarawa State marked a day of peace, unity and friendship, Lafia, the state capital, was yesterday plunged into another round of inter-ethnic violence that left scores dead and many others wounded.

Shabu, the headquarters of Lafia North Development Area, was attacked at about 8am by gunmen suspected to be Ombatse militiamen who were said to be retreating from Alakyo axis where they had battled with herdsmen since 3am the previous night.

Eyewitness account said the incident started after the fleeing Ombatse militiamen were accosted by Gwandara youths at Shabu for starting a fight and then running away after claiming that they were invincible in the early days of the violence.

Provoked, three militiamen among those mocked at shot sporadically and, in the process, hit a woman, a refugee from Arikya where over 30 persons were killed by suspected Fulani marauders last week.

LEADERSHIP recalls that militiamen have wreaked havoc in the southern part of the state, sacking over 30 villages in the past three months.

A resident, Samaila Hudu, from Taraba State, who was fixing his motorcycle in the town at the time of the attack, narrated that shortly after the first contingent of Ombatse men left the town, they mobilised and returned in their hundreds and started shooting at anyone in sight.

According to him, the members of Shabu community were forced to flee their homes through the bush paths because as soon as the Ombatse men invaded the town, they took control of the Lafia-Akwanga federal highway.

Another local, Halima Musa, told LEADERSHIP that she did not know the whereabouts of her six children because the attack came so suddenly and she just ran. She said the Ombatse were ready to kill any Gwandara person they caught as they alleged that the state governor, Alhaji Tanko Al-Makura, who is their kinsman, had allowed the killing of Eggons in the state.

One Beatrice Sunday, who was travelling through the troubled spot, said their vehicle was stopped at Shabu by Ombatse militants who searched every passing vehicle and killed anyone who had the semblance of a Fulani man.

"Two people were pulled out from the Sienna bus we were travelling in. They were butchered to death; in fact they started butchering the one at the back seat with me even while he was still trying to alight; that is why you see blood all over my body," she told LEADERSHIP in a tearful voice.

As the time of filing this report, the police had deposited three dead bodies at the Dalhatu Araf Special Hospital (DASH) while over 20 persons who had various degrees of injuries were receiving treatment at the casualty unit of the hospital, most of them lying on bare floor for want of space.

Similarly, one person was reported killed in Tudun Kauri area of Lafia local government by suspected Eggon youths who blocked a road passing by the state-owned media house, the Nasarawa Broadcasting Service (NBS). Police have arrested two persons in connection with the crime while the corpse was deposited at DASH.

Reacting to the incidents, the chief press secretary (CPS) to Governor Umaru Al-Makura, Mr Yakubu Lamai, said despite relentless effort by enemies of peace to continually plunge the state into chaos, the governor would remain resolute, unwavering and undeterred in his pursuit of peace in the state.

The police public relations officer (PPRO), DSP Ugochukwu Theodore, said officers and men of the command had been drafted to the area and that normalcy had returned.

He called on members of the public avoid rumour mongering and other acts capable of causing disaffection and the breakdown of law and order, even as he promised that the command was working round the clock to ensure the security of life and property.

Nasarawa head of service escapes with bullet wounds

The Nasarawa State head of the civil service (HoS), Dr. Dominic Bako, yesterday escaped death by the whisker in the ongoing



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