

Fear Grips Plateau Residents As Gunmen Kill 50

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Palpable fear has gripped communities in Plateau State after gunmen suspected to be bandits attacked Zurak and Bankalala villages in Bashar District of Wase local government area of Plateau State, killing more than 50 residents, including vigilantes, and injuring others in the process.

A LEADERSHIP investigation revealed that several houses were razed by the rampaging gunmen.

The residents of the community said the incident occurred at about 7pm on Monday when people in the community were going about their normal activities, but that they could not report

the incident due to the poor communication network in the area.

Earlier, the death toll was put at 40, but last night, it increased to 50.

A traditional ruler in Wase, Alhaji Ahmed Lawal, said the death toll had risen to 50 persons, adding that the victims had since been buried in the area according to Muslim rites.

Sahpi'i Sambo, a youth leader in the area, who also confirmed the incident to our correspondent, said the bandits arrived at the community on motorcycles – two to a bike – armed with sophisticated weapons and started shooting sporadically at everyone on sight.

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He said, “More than 40 people were killed while many others were injured. Residents of the village have fled to neighbouring communities. As of yesterday, security personnel had not yet arrived at the community. It was a deadly attack,” Sambo said.

Similarly confirming the killing to LEADERSHIP, the information officer of Wase local government area, Daniel Manwan, said from the information made available to him, over 30 people were killed in Bankalala village while operatives of the Directorate of State Services (DSS) pursued and killed three of the bandits at Zurak village.

“As I speak to you the entire villages are deserted for fear of the unknown,” he said.

Meanwhile, the spokesperson of the state police command, DSP Alabo Alfred, was yet to respond to the inquiry by our correspondent as of the time of filing this report. Also, the state government had yet to speak on the incident as of the time of filing the report.

Deadly attacks on Plateau communities have been frequent in the last decade. One such attack in January left nearly 300 residents dead in more than 20 communities, showing the attack was well-coordinated.