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### 84 killed in Taraba communal crisis

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Written by Fanen Ihyongo

**Taraba State, *Nature's Gift* to the nation, has been turned into a killing field, with no fewer than 84 persons killed at the weekend in renewed communal clashes.**

**Many houses have been torched and the occupants forced to flee.**

**The crisis is reportedly between Kuteb/Fulani and Tiv ethnic groups of Takum -the home of former Minister of Defence Gen. Theophilus Danjuma and Governor-elect Darius Dickson Ishaku.**

Police spokesman Joseph Kwaji, an Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP), said nine bodies were recovered in the attack on Takum township. The casualty figure rose drastically by evening. Kwaji said Sunday's clash in Takum was between

Kuteb and Tiv.

A 24-hour curfew has been imposed by the Chairman of Takum council, Caleb Bitrus Babafi, who told *The Nation* he was meeting with the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) to ascertain the authentic casualty figure.

Babafi directed the police and soldiers to restrict movement in the area to maintain law and order. No arrest has been made.

Over 20 Tiv residents, mostly students, were massacred in Takum township by suspected Kuteb militia on Sunday night. Five of the students were killed at the School of Health Technology hostel. Others were massacred in their homes during a house to house attack by the assailants.

“We woke, this morning (yesterday) only to see the bodies of our brothers and sisters, mostly students,” a Takum resident told *The Nation*.

Thirty persons were massacred at a Tiv settlement, Yongogba, along Takum-Kpashe Road, also on Sunday. The invaders also reduced the settlement to rubble.

Butu village was also attacked on Sunday, after it received a notice, said to be from the Fulani on Friday. Young men and women, fled the village, but an aged man who was left behind was beaten to coma by the invaders. Soldiers took the victim to the MRS Clinic of the 93 Army Battalion, Ada Barracks, where he is recuperating.

Before these attacks, a Tiv laboratory technician, Samuel Ojo, 32, was killed at the Jonas Clinics where he worked. Eye-witnesses said Ojo was in the lab when Kuteb assailants came and dragged him outside and hung a tyre across his neck before setting him ablaze.

A Kuteb source said his kinsmen were taking vengeance on five of their people who were allegedly gun down at Age by Tiv militia. A source said the deceased, two men and three women, were riding on motorcycles on Barrack-Dogon Gawa Road to a church conference when they were killed.

It was gathered that the fighters of the warring groups have laid siege to many of the roads linking Takum, where they remove and kill people from commercial vehicles.

Seven Tiv passengers were removed from a commercial vehicle on Dogon Gawa-Katsina-Ala Road. They were killed.

Tiv woman was macheted while riding on a motorbike with her son on the route on Saturday. A military van appeared at the scene and the marauders ran out of sight. The soldiers took the woman, nearly deformed, to the Rapha Hospital. Her son who escaped into the bush, said the attackers were Fulani and Kuteb.

Four Kutebs and a Jukun were shot dead while trekking down the trough between Kwali and Gbaaondo settlements by gunmen. One of the deceased had his eyes removed when the bodies were recovered.

Three victims could not be identified because their bodies were cut into pieces. This attack and killing took place on Vingir Road, near Loko. The wives of the deceased were spared by the attackers who asked them to go and break the news at home. The women said the killers were Fulani.

On Wednesday, a Hausa chickens and goats trader, popularly known as Yaro Yaro, was killed with his Tiv business partner, John Chin. The duo had gone to some villages to buy chickens and goats and were returning home when suspected Fulani gunmen opened fire on them.

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