

NEWS

Tension as gunmen kill 40 in Plateau communities

• Military recovers bodies of 'missing soldiers'

AT least 40 Berom women and children have been killed in two attacks by gunmen in Plateau State.

The killings were said to have happened within two days.

The gunmen reportedly stole some heads of cattle during the attacks.

The Berom communities have been living in fear since the attacks occurred.

Though none of the gunmen has been arrested by security agencies, the Berom alleged that their attackers were Fulani herdsmen.

Similar attacks were carried out last week in some communities in Riyom Local Government Area.

From Yusufu Aminu Idegu,
Jos

Barkin Ladi Local government Chairman Emmanuel Lomang said the suspected Fulani gunmen entered the villages through Jos East borders in the night.

Lomang said: "The gunmen killed 17 people, including women, in Vat village while 13 others were killed in Zakupang village, both in Foron District of the Barkin Local Government Area."

Apart from the Monday attacks, in which 30 people were killed, gunmen, suspected to be Fulani herdsmen, also killed two newly married men at

Kakpwis village in Foron District.

Ward Head of Kakpwis Dagwom, Ahmadu Dung Hwere said: "The attacks occurred around 11pm. Emmanuel Joshua and Bot Joshua were killed in their homes and the killers stole 20 cows belonging to the late Joshua."

An eyewitness said Emmanuel and Bot were shot when they were discussing near the cowshed.

Emmanuel, 32, and Bot, 30, were married and they had children.

The councillor representing Kakpwis Ward in Foron District of Barkin Ladi Local

Government Area, Istifanus Gwom Dung, condemned the attacks.

The councillor described the incessant attacks in the area as a strategy to eliminate the Berom.

Dung decried the nonchalance of security agencies in the local government area, especially men of the Special Task Force (STF), who ought to protect the lives and property of the residents.

The Special Task Force (STF) on Jos crisis had not spoken on the attacks at the time of filing this report last night.

Also, the STF said it had recovered two bodies, of the

three missing soldiers, at Kurmi, a border village between Taraba and Plateau states.

STF spokesman Iweha Ikedichi, a captain, spoke yesterday in Wase with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN).

A militia group reportedly killed six soldiers at Kurmi village last Tuesday. Three other soldiers were declared missing.

There had been series of attacks at Kurmi, where innocent civilians, particularly women and children, were maimed and killed by the suspected militia group.

The attacks worsened when nine soldiers were killed.

The killings prompted the STF, in collaboration with the 3 Armoured Division, to locate and engage the group in a battle on Saturday.

"We found the two bodies of our missing soldiers during our operation in Kurmi, Wadata and Kadarko communities," Ikedichi said.

"As we speak, our men are still searching for the remaining soldier. We pray he is still alive.

"We shall leave no stone unturned in our search until we find our man - whether dead or alive," he added.

The STF spokesman said the military was working hard to curb the excesses of the militia group, which had a stronghold in the communities.