

Gunmen, herders kill 43 in Plateau, Benue states attacks

- Family of 16 burnt to death in community
- Woman, 4 kids slain

From Kolade Adeyemi, Jos, Ujah Emmanuel, Makurdi, Tony Akowe and Nwanosike Onu, Awka

THERE was outrage in Jos, Plateau State capital, and Benue State on Tuesday night, following the killing of 43 people in different attacks.

Thirty-five people were killed in different attacks in Yelwa Zangam in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State.

Also, eight were killed in Yelawa, Guma Local Government Area of Benue State.

Among those killed were a family of 16, burnt to death in Plateau and a mother and four kids, murdered in Benue.

The latest bloodletting in Plateau raised to 58 the number of lives lost to attacks in the state in the last 11 days.

On August 15, 23 persons travelling to Ondo State on their way from a religious event in Bauchi, capital of Bauchi State met

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'PDP tearing apart over 2023 zoning'

- NWC affirms Akinwonmi
- Governors meet on crisis

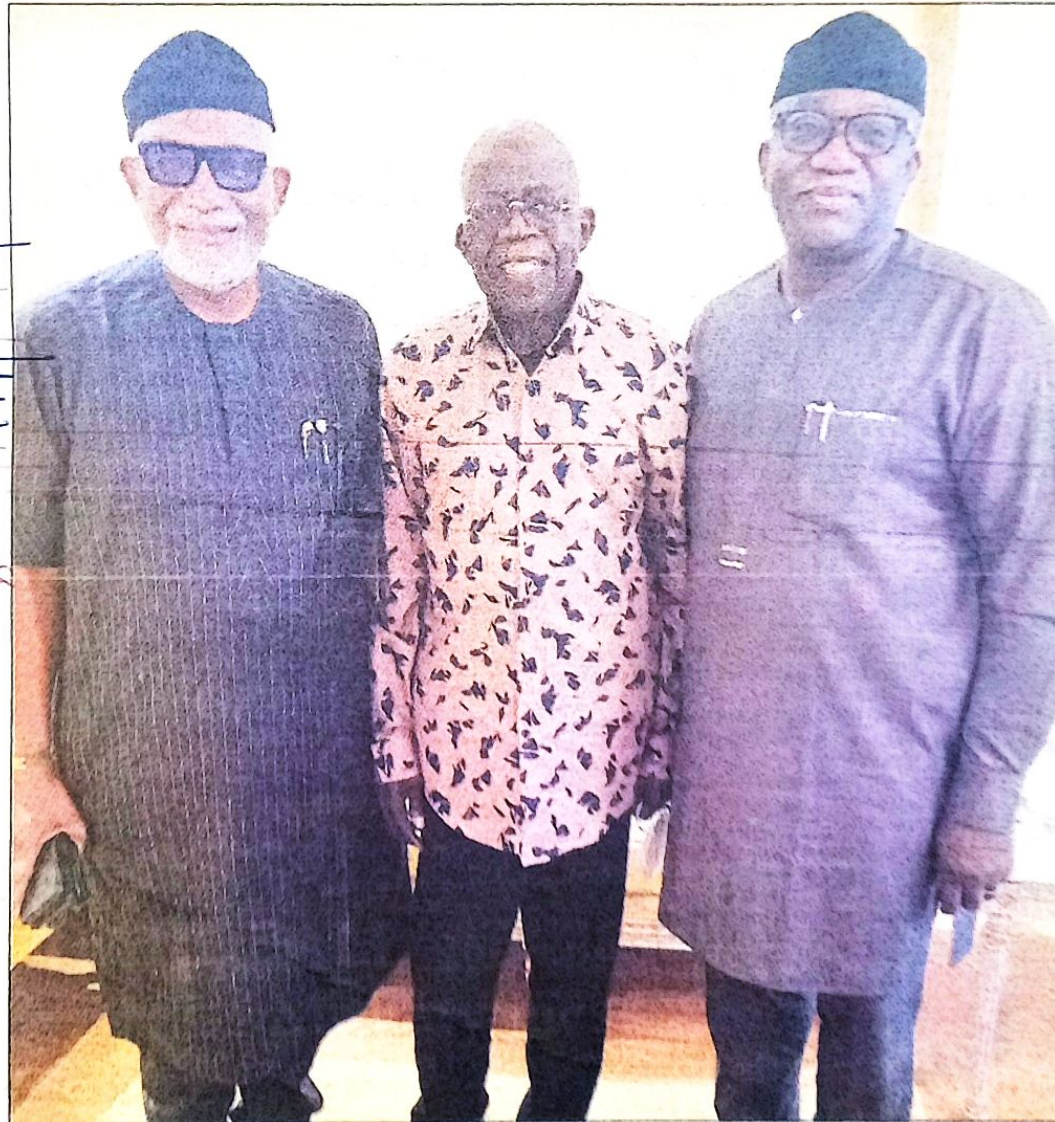
By Emmanuel Oladesu, Gbade Ogunwale and Abdulgafar Alabelewe, Abuja

THE Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) leadership crisis was aggravated by the antagonistic positions of the competing forces on zoning of party offices and the 2023 presidential ticket, it was learnt last night.

The party's governors are meeting today in Abuja to deliberate on the lingering disagreement to chart a path towards a solution.

Yesterday, prominent party chieftains, including members of the National Working Committee (NWC) resolved to back Elder

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• From left: Ondo State Governor Oluwarotimi Akeredolu, All Progressives Congress (APC) stalwart Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu and Ekiti State Governor Kayode Fayemi when the governors visited Tinubu in London...yesterday

'Banks should probe deposits'

ECONOMIC and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Chairman Abdulrasheed Bawa has urged commercial banks to investigate the source of income of their customers.

The anti-graft agency boss spoke in Abuja when...

Business Page 8

Clubs' clearance delays Eagles list

THE delay in the release of the Super Eagles list for the Qatar 2022 World Cup qualifiers might not be ~~unrelated~~ with the stance of teams in the English Premier League and La Liga unwilling to release players...



Sport Page 2

Zambia to cut \$12b debt

NEW President Hakainde Hichilema has pledged to tackle Zambia's "unsustainable" debt, lamenting that the national budget was overwhelmed by the cost of servicing it.

Foreign Page 2

Gunmen, herders kill 43 in Plateau, Benue attacks

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their untimely death when their vehicle ran into a group of irate youths on Gada-Biyu - Rukuba Road in Jos North.

The incident led to the imposition of a 24-hour curfew on Jos North by Governor Simon Lalong. The governor, who later relaxed the curfew, re-imposed it after the Tuesday night killings.

In spite of the curfew, angry youths took to the streets of Jos yesterday in protest against the orgy of killings.

They picked up the bodies in Yelwa Zangam, loaded them in trucks and headed for the Government House and the House of Assembly complex.

The Nation gathered that the youth were prevented from entering the Government House premises in the Rayfield area of Jos by security agents. They dropped some of the bodies at the gate.

They claimed that among the 35 dead were 16 members of a family, who were burnt in their house by the gunmen.

An eye witness told reporters that the gunmen invaded the community at about 9pm, burning houses

and shooting at anyone in sight.

He added that the attackers disabled a bridge linking Yelwa Zangam and Naraguta before launching the attack.

Police spokesman Gabriel Ubah, who confirmed the attack, did not give details.

He said: "We are aware of an incident in the area. I will brief you later." As of 9.30 pm yesterday, he had yet to do so.

It was however gathered that 10 suspects were arrested by security operatives.

The Nation gathered that the eight persons killed in Yelawa included a housewife and her four children.

Yelewa, a border community between Nassarwa and Benue states is located along the Makurdi-Lafia Highway.

Franc Utoo, Senior Special Assistant to Governor Samuel Ortom on Projects Monitoring and an indigene of the community said: "Last (Tuesday) night, herdsmen invaded Yelewa and killed a housewife and her four children.

"The woman was preparing supper for the little kids who were playing around. Four other people were also killed during the attack."

Commander of Operation

Whirl Stroke (OPWS) Brig - Gen. Clement Afere, confirmed the incident, saying: "It's true."

Lalong condemned the attack as a "barbaric act" and directed security agencies to track down the assailants and their sponsors.

He said in a statement by his spokesman, Dr. Makut Macham, that the attack was carefully planned.

The governor, who sympathised with the victims, called for calm, urging those in Jos North council must adhere to the 24-hour curfew.

He added that the dusk-to-dawn curfew in Jos South and Bassa LGAs will remain until further notice.

Speaker of the House of Assembly Abok Ayuba, who received the protesting youths, also called for calm and restraint.

The youths urged Ayuba to liaise with other arms of government to end the crises in the area.

The Speaker said: "We are all affected by what is happening in Plateau State. But please, calm down as 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."

National Assembly members, including Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, Ahmed Wase, flayed the killings and called for the arrest of the perpetrators.

The other lawmakers are Senators Hezekiah Dimka (Plateau Central), Nora Dadu'ut and Istifanus Gyang (Plateau North)

Wase said in a statement by his Chief Press Secretary, Umar Puma, that the attack was 'inhuman, senseless and unwarranted.

He commiserated with the bereaved families and other citizens, urging them to continue to support measures aimed at bringing "these ugly attacks under control."

Dimka advised the people to be on the alert and cooperate with security agencies as they investigate the sad incidents.

Gyang said he was pained that the people of Plateau State had been abandoned to their fate by the Federal Government.

In her statement, Dadu'ut called on the government to take necessary and decisive actions to apprehend and prosecute those behind the killings.