

# Taraba crises: Three security operatives killed, many civilians injured



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A soldier has been feared killed and several civilians critically injured following gunmen attack in Takum Local Government Area of Taraba State.

This has brought to three, the number of security operatives ambushed and killed within a week in the area.

The Nation has reported the murder of two personnel of the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS), Inspectors Adike Austin and Uzo James, in the same axis last week.

Narrating what happened, a resident, KM Kasman, said the soldier was ambushed while returning from his duty post in a similar manner to last week's episode involving the immigration officers.

"He left his duty post at Kashimbila Power Station and was attacked on his way back to the barracks. He was on a motorcycle and he ran into an ambush by some armed men. "They picked his gun and his footwear. Two men from Kuteb and Tiv tribes also fell into the ambush but they survived with machete cuts. It was in the same place the immigration officers were killed," he disclosed.

According to him, the troubled area was surrounded by herdsmen, making it a high risk zone.

"You can't travel a kilometer from Takum and come back safely. They kidnap and lay ambushes daily."

"One surprising thing is that on every market day, the army escorts the herders with their cows to the market to sell. From Mararaba to Kashimbilla through Kwanbai down to Takum cattle market.

"It is like the army is using the crisis to make money. The army and police seem to be helping the herders to grow stronger," he lamented.

Meanwhile, the Kuteb nation has risen against the endless bloodshed in their land.

In a press conference in Jalingo yesterday, the Kuteb Yatgso of Nigeria (KYN), condemned the killing and displacement of their people.

According to KYN President, Emmanuel Ukwon, school and farming activities have been suspended as a result of the killings.

He described the crisis as having political undertone, adding that the forthcoming census exercise might be affected in the area.

"Dozens of innocent citizens have been killed by bandits in Takum, Ussa and Yangtu. Equally, thousands of people have been displaced from their homes.

"I want the whole world to know that about 80% of Kuteb people are farmers and with the current wave of attacks, if action is not taken to stop the conflict, farming activities may be grounded and famine will be inevitable in Takum, Ussa and Yangtu.

“School activities have stopped in the affected areas for over one year now. There is no free movement of persons in the affected areas because one could be attacked at any point.

“Since early last year, our people have been displaced in their thousands from their homes as a result of bandits’ attack. They cannot go back to their homes because of insecurity and census staff dare not go to the affected areas to carry out housing census,” Ukwem lamented.

He therefore called on the National Population Commission to look into the people’s predicament and ensure that the affected areas were not left out during the forthcoming “headcount.”

The military spokesman in Taraba, Lt. O. Oni did not confirm the incident but said military operations were ongoing in the general area.

“Military operations are currently ongoing in the area. But for now I can’t ascertain if there is any such incident.

“Ussa has been in the news. There has been communal clashes in the general area. So after the operation, we can get facts and figures,” he stated.