

Plateau killings: 125 buried; police recover 117 bodies



Kolade Adeyemi, Jos



May 20, 2023

• *Lalong summons emergency security meeting*

No fewer than 125 dead bodies were recovered and given mass burial in the past three days, Mwaghavul Development Association (MDA), a socio-cultural organisation in Mangu Local Government Area of Plateau State, has said.

The organisation consequently raised the alarm over the spate of killings in the state by gunmen suspected to be herdsmen.

This is as the Plateau State Police Command declared that a total of 117 bodies had been recovered.



**OPEN LETTER TO PRESIDENT-ELECT,
SENATOR BOLA AHMED TINUBU:**

**APPOINT AN INDIGENE OF FCT,
ABUJA, AS MINISTER.**

BY ABDULRAHMAN SALIHU

Addressing newsmen in Jos, Plateau State, the National President of the Mwaghavul Development Association, Sir, Joseph Gwankat, said apart from the two communities- Fungzai and Kubwat that were initially attacked in the early hours of Tuesday, many other communities and villages also suffered the same fate with many inhabitants killed.

He said those displaced as a result of the attack were going through a harrowing period as they were lacking food and other amenities. He noted that more than 20,000 people were displaced and are currently taking refuge at the local government secretariat, churches and traditional rulers' palaces.

"It may interest you to know that since the attack on our communities started on Tuesday, the government has not visited those places attacked by gunmen. Those they have seen were people displaced and roaming around for succour. The local government and the Mwaghavul Development Association cannot handle the situation alone.

"By our estimation, more than 20,000 people have been displaced, though we have yet to take inventory but within three days we had buried 125 people and we are still counting. There are more corpses still floating in ponds that we cannot even access, many are dumped in wells."

Continuing, he said: "The attack was unprovoked like the one that happened in the early hours of Tuesday. I also want to correct the erroneous impression that it was a clash. It was not a clash but an attack on innocent people. The word unknown gunmen should be discarded because there is no way an

attack will take place for one week and the security men will tell us that they are unknown,” he said.

He, therefore, called on the government to take immediate steps to facilitate the return of all persons displaced and now in different IDPs’ camps by reconstructing their homes and providing security for them as well.

Gwankat noted that the government should take full responsibility of educating the children below the age of 10 who have lost both their parents as a result of the attack while arrangements should be made for those in SS3 whose WAEC examinations were disrupted as result of the attacks.

Meanwhile, the Plateau State Police Command says it had recovered a total of 117 bodies and arrested seven suspects.

The Command in a statement signed by its spokesman, DSP Alfred Alabo, informed that in addition to the five suspects earlier announced, “Two more suspects had been arrested and exhibits recovered from them include two cutlasses, one dagger and some amount of money suspected to have been stolen from the houses they looted, as they were all arrested in the act of committing the crime by officers from one of our tactical team led by Supol Bamidele know Eagle Eye unit .

“The suspects are presently in our custody and will be charged to court for prosecution after our investigations are concluded.

“After calm was restored to the communities, more bodies were recovered which is part of the thirty earlier reported. The figures are as follows: (1) Kubat Village 27, (2) Kantoma Village 31, (3) Alagon 6, (4) Kubwas 8, (5) Dumnang 9, (6). Shangal 1, (7) Gwet 3 and (8) Washna 2.

Also, Manret hospital had about Fifteen (15) injured persons, Infinity hospital had over Eight (8), Allah Nakowa Hospital had over Sixteen (16) while at Mangu Cottage Hospital there are an unspecified number of persons receiving treatment there also.”

The command extended its condolences to the families of the deceased and assured them that everything possible was being done to bring the perpetrators of this heinous crime to justice.

To avert a reoccurrence of the dastardly act, the Plateau State Security Council yesterday held an emergency meeting to review and assess the recent attacks in various villages of Mangu Local Government which left many dead and property worth millions of naira destroyed.

Dr. Makut Simon Macham Director of Press and Public Affairs to the Governor in a statement stated that the security meeting which was held at the Government House, Rayfield, Jos, was chaired by the Governor Simon Bako Lalong.

Governor Lalong while briefing reporters after the meeting said the council reviewed the situation and resolved that all suspects arrested for allegedly carrying out the attack must be immediately prosecuted in a transparent and open manner to send a strong message to the public that no criminal conduct will go unpunished.

He said the council condemned the dastardly act and remains committed to sustaining the search for other fleeing perpetrators who must be arrested and dealt with swiftly.

The governor also stated that the Security Council mandated the security agencies to sustain the presence of their personnel on ground to rebuild confidence and halt any further affront on innocent citizens.

Lalong also disclosed that the Government will immediately step in to address the plight of displaced persons in the area and work towards restoring normalcy.

The governor also announced the plans to step up engagement both at local and State levels which will lead to setting up of an Engagement Committee to douse the tension generated by the unfortunate incident.

The council also appealed to citizens to increase vigilance and avoid any action that can lead to escalation of the situation.

He assured that the Government will not fold its arms to see its citizens being maimed and killed by criminals for no reason.