

Plateau killings: 130 killed, 1,000 houses, 22 churches razed, say leaders



Kolade Adeyemi, Jos

- *Over 200 Mangu IDPs seek refuge in neighbouring councils*



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About 130 people were killed, 1000 houses and 22 churches burnt across 22 villages during last week's gunmen attacks in Mangu and Riyom Local Government Areas of [Plateau](#), the state's church denominational leaders and spiritual fathers have said.

They condemned in strong terms, the resurgence of mindless killings of citizens, especially Christians by terrorists masquerading as herdsmen.

Invaders last week launched simultaneous and sustained attacks in affected communities for over 72 hours which led to wanton destruction of lives and properties.



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

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

BY ABDULRAHMAN SALIHU

A statement yesterday by Rev. Stephen Baba Panya of the [Evangelical Church Winning All](#) (ECWA), on behalf of the denominational leaders and spiritual fathers, noted that the killings by so-called unknown gunmen, which started on May 15, in communities in Mangu, claimed many lives and properties with many persons still missing.

“We are very deeply saddened by the resurgence of mindless killings of innocent citizens, mainly Christians, in Mangu and Riyom Local Government Areas of Plateau State.

“The villages affected include Fungzai, Hale, Kubwat, Bwoi and many other communities of Kombun District of Mangu Local Government Area, and some communities in Riyom Local Government Area.

“According to reports, about 130 people were killed, about 1000 houses and about 22 churches burnt, and about 22 villages affected.

“We the church Denominational Leaders and Spiritual Fathers on the Plateau, view this round of killings and destruction as devilish, barbaric and an act of genocide against innocent and armless villagers.

“This again is another sad commentary on the unabated bloodletting that has engulfed Plateau State over the years without any meaningful attempt by government at federal and state levels to decisively address the unfortunate situation.”

Continuing, the cleric wondered how long the bloodletting would persist, noting that the development has raised a number of questions including: “Who really wants to destroy Plateau State and why? Are the killers really ‘unknown’ gunmen and why do they always have sophisticated weapons and enough time to wreak havoc on innocent citizens? What has happened to those arrested in previous attacks? Are the security agencies in Plateau really handicapped?”

“If we must move forward as a peaceful, united and democratic nation, then these and many other questions must be answered through deliberate action by government to bring these killings to an end and restore peace, tranquility in Plateau State and other troubled parts of the country.

“We the Church Leaders and immediate Spiritual Fathers are calling on the government and all security agencies to immediately stop this ongoing massacre and its spread to more communities.

“We also urge relevant emergency management agencies to urgently provide shelter and relief materials to the affected communities and bring them the much-needed succour.

“We implore spirited individuals, groups, and organisations to also come to the aid of these devastated communities.

“We call on citizens to remain calm and peaceful in the face of this unwarranted persecution, and trust that government and its relevant agencies will immediately restore normalcy and build confidence in the people.

“We commiserate with families that have lost their loved ones and pray for God’s comfort, healing and restoration to all those injured.

“The church must not relent in praying to God for his divine intervention, inner strength and perseverance for the people of Plateau State. Let us hold on to God’s promises and fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith (Hebrews 12:1-3),” he stated.

This is just as another group, Plateau Youths G17, said over 200 people have been killed in gunmen attacks between April and May, describing the murders as gruesome, wicked, cruel, inhumane, and genocidal.

The group’s leader, Rev. Joshua Sati, who provided timelines of some of the attacks at a press conference in Jos, said they were shocked on the silence, inactions of government at all levels, and security agencies, who were never seen when the assailants rampage through the night executing their plans.

“We are heartbroken and bewildered on the death toll which remains on the rise

with most recent victims numbering over 100.

“The presence of the joint task force in the state has not been significantly felt as the attacks and killings have escalated to areas which hitherto were known to be peaceful. In some cases, the attackers have become emboldened to have even carried out some of those attacks within meters of military formation,” the group said.

It called on the government to speedily fish out the culprits, as well as resettle those rendered homeless and presently seeking shelter at Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps.

The group also advised all communities in the Plateau to rise and defend themselves through community policing, urging the 10th National Assembly to speed up the establishment of state police through appropriate legislation to enable communities to be secure.

“We wish to call on the in-coming administration of Barr. Caleb Mutfwang

to, as a matter of urgency set in motion the resuscitation of Operation Rainbow to fully integrate it with existing community volunteer security outfits like vigilante groups, hunters’ associations and others as a means of mobilising citizens to take part in defending themselves,” it said.

Meanwhile, over 200 displaced persons especially women and children who fled Mangu villages have taken refuge in Pankshin Local Government Area.

Council Chairman, Audu Kak’mena, who visited one of the IDP Camps at the National Association of Mwaghavul Students’, (NAMS) House, Bwarack, opposite Federal College of Education, Pankshin, sympathised with them over the unfortunate incident.

He assured them of immediate intervention by the Council to cushion their suffering, urging the federal, state governments and well spirited individuals and organisations to assist the IDPs with relief materials.

The chairman who was represented by the Council’s Secretary, Edward Sunkur, said the IDPs were in dire need of food and shelter, commiserating with the people of Mangu over the attacks.

He charged the people of Pankshin LGA to be alert by reporting strange faces or movements to the security agencies nearest to them.

A displaced person, Juliana Barnabas, who relived the attacks, claimed they saw people of a particular tribe, who they had co-habited peacefully till May 15, packed their belongings and left the communities.

She claimed they asked them where they were going to that morning and that was when they started hearing gunshots from different directions leading to killings of natives and burning of houses.

Juliana said the attackers carried sophisticated weapons and moved from one village to the other unleashing mayhem, unchallenged.

While appreciating the Council Chairman of Pankshin Local Government for the visit, the IDPs said food was the major challenge facing them, adding that they usually allow only their children to eat what they got, which was not enough for the kids.