

18 feared killed in fresh Plateau attacks

• State varsity students protest over death of colleague by gunmen • Governor sues for calm

RAMPAGING herdsmen yesterday threw Plateau State into fresh mourning following multiple attacks that claimed at least 18 lives.

Their targets included Chikam, close to the Plateau State University in Bokkos Local Government Area where a student of the institution was killed.

The death of the 200-level Computer Science student sparked a protest by his mates.

Governor Caleb Mutfwang appealed for calm and reassured residents, particularly students, of government's unwavering commitment to safeguarding their lives and property.

The herdsmen first struck on Thursday night in four Bokkos communities, killing six people.

Similar attacks were launched on Ilengpan in Mangu Local Government Area in the early hours of yesterday, leaving one other dead.

The latest onslaught followed on the heels of the April 12 bloodshed in Kopranle community of Mangu, and parts of Bokkos LGA in which 10 people were killed.

The university Registrar, Yakubu F. Ayube, named the student killed in the attack as Dading James Jordan.

He called the attack senseless despite relentless efforts by the state government, security agencies, the management of the university and other stakeholders to improve the security situation on the campus and the surrounding communities.

"Unfortunately, the enemies of the university and the state brought this dastardly attack leading to the loss of our dear student," he said.

The Vice-Chancellor and the entire management, according to him, had conveyed their condolences to the family of the deceased, the student body and the university commu-

■ From Kolade Adeyemi, Jos ■

nity. Consequently, the management of the university declared yesterday and today as mourning days in memory of the deceased.

The Registrar added: "Accordingly, all the examinations earlier scheduled for Friday-19 and Saturday 20" April, 2024 are hereby suspended."

"While calling on our students to remain calm and law abiding, we wish to call on the security agencies to beef up security around the university in order to secure staff and students as we look into other ways of making the University more secure.

Bokkos LGA Chairman Monday Kassam said the gunmen stormed the targeted communities, shooting sporadically into the air to announce their arrival.

He said the student was hit in her room.

Kassam said: "In the morning, the students came out in large numbers. They were demonstrating when one of them was shot again, based on the information I heard from an eyewitness.

"And the militias, not satisfied, had to come again this morning despite the presence of security. They were given a chase but I don't know the number of casualties.

"As of yesterday six persons were reported dead."

In a separate statement, the governor's liaison officer in Mangu South State Constituency, Hon. Bala Fwange, described the killing of 12 people in Talengpat as disheartening and tragic.

He asked the police authorities and other security agencies to "immediately respond and restore normalcy to the affected communities."

He added: "The safety and security of our people must be prioritised at all times.

"Our deepest condolences go out to the families of the victims who have lost their loved ones in this brutal attack. We demand a thorough investigation into the root causes of this violence, which has been ongoing since 17th April 2023.

"We implore the security agencies to swiftly apprehend the masterminds of these atrocities and bring them to justice. It is crucial for the government at all levels to intervene and prevent further escalation of the situation in Mangu LGA and surrounding areas."

The Senator representing Plateau Central, Diket Plang, visited Telengpat on condolence to the community.

He expressed concern over the escalating violence in the region and pledged to work closely with relevant authorities to ensure the safety and security of the people of Plateau Central.

Sen. Plang called for an immediate investigation into the incident and urged the community to remain calm and vigilant while security agencies work to apprehend the perpetrators. He emphasised the need for collaborative efforts among all stakeholders to restore peace and stability in the area.

The senator assured the community of his unwavering commitment to addressing the root causes of the violence and implementing measures to prevent such tragedies in the future. He promised to advocate for increased security presence and support for affected communities in Plateau Central.

Mutfwang urges for calm, call for enhanced security measures

In his own reaction, Governor Mutfwang urged the students remain composed in the face of the tragedy, as government is determined to appre-

hend and prosecute those responsible for the heinous acts.

He stressed the importance of collaboration among the university management, students, community leaders, and security agencies for enhanced security and the safety of everyone in the area.

He commended the security agencies for their swift response to the incident and encouraged them to remain

steadfast in fulfilling their constitutional duty to protect innocent citizens.

He extended his heartfelt condolences to the family of the deceased student and all those affected by the incident, praying for the swift recovery of the injured.

He reaffirmed his administration's commitment to fostering peace and security across the state.

Group condemns killing of hotel manager, demands justice

■ From Chris Njoku, Owerri ■

THE Coalition of South East Youth Leaders (COSEYL) has strongly condemned the killing of Mr. Achimugu James Etubi, the manager of Royal Damgrete Hotel, Umuahia, in Abia State by officers of the Nigerian Army.

According to reports, the army officers tortured hotel staff over the death of a Nigerian Air Force (NAF) officer cadet, Emmanuel Chidiebere Onyemereche, who drowned in the hotel's swimming pool.

The incident resulted in the death of the hotel manager.

COSEYL President Gen-

eral, Comrade Goodluck Ibem yesterday, described the act as "unprofessional and totally unacceptable."

He called for an immediate probe and disciplinary actions against the officers involved, stating that their actions had tarnished the country's reputation among nations.

COSEYL commiserate with the Nigerian Air Force over the loss of Officer Cadet Onyemereche but emphasized that "this does not justify the brutal actions of the army officers."

Chamber of Commerce lacks permanent office in Imo

■ From Chris Njoku, Owerri ■

IN a surprising revelation, the Owerri Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines, and Agriculture (OCCIMA) has been operating without a permanent office despite its efforts to attract investments worth over \$11.5 billion to the state.

President of OCCIMA, Barr. Tony Amah, disclosed this during a courtesy visit to the President General of Ohanaeze Ndigbo Worldwide, Chief Em-

manuel Iwuanyanwu.

Amah commended Iwuanyanwu's leadership and appealed for his intervention to secure a permanent office for OCCIMA, which has been renting a space since its establishment in 1970.

OCCIMA faces another challenge in hosting a national trade fair in November, as there is no suitable venue in Owerri.