

Herdsman on rampage again, kill 5, burn 20 houses in Plateau

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THE troubled Bassa Local Government Area of Plateau State was on Thursday attacked, again, by gunmen suspected to be Fulani herdsmen who killed five people and injured eight others in an invasion that also saw about 20 houses burnt.

In the past week, no fewer than 12 people were killed in the area and several cattle rustled.

The chairman of Irigwe Development Association, Mr Sunday Abdu, who confirmed the deaths and destruction of property in the Thursday attack which occurred around 9.00 p.m., said more than one village was attacked by the gunmen.

"The causality figure was more than five. I am just going around. Five people were killed in the first village I visited. I am still going round to see the number of people that were affected. My brother is affected, too. Until I finish going round, I cannot tell you the actual figure. As soon as I am through, I will call you," he told Saturday Tribune's correspondent.

A source said the attack on Jebu-Miango alone claimed five lives, adding that the gunmen attacked a passenger bus and killed five people, while people around were also shot. He said the gunmen disappeared after setting the bus ablaze.

A statement by the Public Relations Officer, ASP Terna Topev, confirmed three people dead. It said at about 8.00 p.m., the police division in Bassa Local Government Area received

a distress call that Jebbu-Miango Village was under attack and the division immediately informed the command and mobilised to the place.

"While we were close to the village, the armed men suspected to be Fulani herdsmen sighted us and took to their heels. Three people were killed and burnt by the armed men.

"One Danlami Gomas-ter of Kwall District and one Emmanuel Audu of Jebbu-Miango were identified while the last person is yet to be identified. Eight other persons sustained varying degrees of gunshot injuries and were taken to Enos Hospital in Bassa for medical treatment. Twenty

housing units were also set ablaze."

The statement added that investigation was on to unravel the remote and immediate causes of the incident.

Meanwhile, Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association (MCABAN) has written a petition to the Commander of Operation Safe Haven in charge of security in the state over what it described as incessant attacks on its members by "Irigwe Militia Group."

The group, in the petition signed by its state chairman, Mallam Mohammad Nuru, chronicled attacks on its members in the past two months and called on the security unit to use

the command intelligence network to come up with a method capable of overwhelming "the Irigwe gunmen" and any others who were on the prowl.

"These robbers should never be allowed to intimidate, harass and threaten our peace-loving community members anymore. We are using this medium to call on you to use your good office, being one of the effective security agencies in the state, to curb the menace and security challenges and enforce peace on the Plateau and its environs. We are appealing for fair and effective operation in safeguarding innocent citizens," the association said.

Obasanjo's call for coalition timely —Hon Oduyoye

BY DAPO FALADE

The call by former President Olusegun Obasanjo for a coalition of forces to stop President Muhammadu Buhari from succeeding himself or the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) from producing a successor in 2019 has been described as timely and a welcome development.

The former president had, in a public letter to Buhari on Tuesday, accused the president of being incompetent in tackling the problems besotting the country, declaring that both APC and PDP were not fit to move the country forward.

Honourable Babatunde Oduyoye, a former member of the House of Representatives, while speaking with *Saturday Tribune*, said Obasanjo's interven-

tion was a good one.

He however admonished that the Coalition for Nigeria project by Obasanjo should not be adopted wholesale for the entire country as, according to him, each state have its own peculiarities and should thus be treated accordingly.

"But the idea might not work in all the states because what happened differed from state to state. In Oyo State, for example, what is needed is generational shift. It is time for the young turks, irrespective of their party affiliation, to come together and salvage the state.

"In Oyo State, APC is time bomb, waiting to explode. There is disaffection in the party as members and leaders alike are crying of marginalization, even as the state executives of the party are said to be mere

rubber stamps.

"The same goes for Oyo PDP which has failed to put its act together. By holding two congresses, it is doubtful if the party can ever stabilize and challenge the status quo.

"The letter by Chief Obasanjo to President Buhari is a reflection of the disaffection in APC and disunity in PDP. AD is the only credible alternative in the task of moving the South West forward and stop it from been subservient to a particular part of the country.

"I can assure you that most of the principal actors in the two political parties are talking with us in the Alliance for Democracy (AD). AD is taking off from where it stopped. It is the only party which can address the issue of the killer herdsmen and champion the cause and course of restructuring," he said.