

# Plateau killings: Death toll hits 85, 57 victims get mass burial

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THE death toll from Tuesday's attack at two communities, Fungzai, Kubwat and other surrounding villages in Mangu local government area of Plateau State has risen to 85, while 57 victims were given mass burials in batches on Wednesday.

The National President, Mwaghavul Development Association, Joseph Gwankat, made this known while speaking to journalists on Wednesday after a security meeting at the palace of the traditional ruler in mangu.

Gwankat stated that the search for missing persons is still ongoing in the affected communities adding that several communities were attacked simultaneously by suspected herdsmen, leading to killings as well as burning of houses and destruction of farmlands in the affected communities.

Shortly before the security meeting which lasts for more than four hours, women in their large number besieged the palace of the traditional ruler protesting the killings and calling on the government to come to their aids.

The Mishkcham Mwaghavul, John Putmang

Hirse, alongside the local government chairman and district heads from the communities appealed for the deployment of reinforcements to the communities to safeguard citizens.

A source close to the local government revealed that in the reprisal attacks that followed, many houses were burned while villages were equally sacked, forcing the inhabitants to relocate to the council headquarters.

The source further disclosed that apart from the two communities earlier attacked, the gunmen also attacked other villages within the local government while fleeing after the dastardly operations.

Meanwhile, 57 victims of a community in Mangu were given a mass burial on Wednesday amidst tears by relatives and members of the community who gathered to witness the funeral service on Wednesday.

A local government official who craved anonymity told the Nigerian Tribune that 30 of the victims from Fungzai were given mass burial, another batch of 22 in Kubwat in the early hours of Wednesday, and five who died while receiving treatment in the

early hours of today were also given mass burial at about 3:00 pm.

The 57 victims of the attack were given a mass burial amidst tears by relatives and members of the community who gathered to witness the funeral service.

The residents call on the security agencies and the government to urgently stop the lingering insecurity in the local government and other parts of the state.

Speaking with the Nigerian Tribune, the Chairman of Mangu local government, Hon. Minister Dabut, who confirmed that over 50 people were given mass burials on Wednesday, said despite interventions from the security agencies, killings are still going on in different parts of the local government.

Those displaced in various villages and communities within the local government are presently taking refuge in the council headquarters and palaces of district heads and traditional rulers in the area.

Meanwhile, security operatives in Plateau State have arrested five suspects in connection with the attack.

Two Hilux vans belonging to NSCDC were overrun and vandalised by the attackers,

while exhibits which include AK-47 and other weapons were recovered from the gunmen.

Plateau State Police Command in a statement signed by its spokesman, DSP Alfred Alabo said more reinforcement of security men comprising of DOPS Plateau Command, MOPOL 8, CTU, NSCDC and Operation Rainbow have been mobilised to the affected communities and neighbouring villages which has now led to retreat from the attackers.

"Five suspects have so far been arrested and are currently in the custody of the STF. Also, exhibits recovered include an AK-47 rifle, a revolver pistol and cartridges.

"In the course of the struggle with the attackers, one Cpl. Abdullahi Umar 07NA attached to sector 8 STF sustained bullet injuries and is currently receiving treatment at the STF headquarters, Jos" it declared.

The Command further disclosed that security men have been deployed to the area to forestall any further breakdown of law and order, adding that calm has been restored to the general area of Mangu Local Government, while monitoring continues.