

# 1 Cleric, 20 others killed in attacks on Plateau communities

## Traditional ruler abducted

Isaac Shobayo | Jos

**T**HE Democracy Day celebration in Plateau State on Monday turned into a day of mourning for communities in Barakin-Ladi and Riyom local government areas of the state following the killing of about 21 people, including a cleric, by rampaging terrorists on Sunday.

According to a statement by the Beron Youth Moulders Association (BMY) and signed by its National Publicity Secretary, Rwang Tengwong, 21 people were killed and several others injured on Sunday during coordinated attacks by militias on residents of Rim, Jol, and Kwi communities of Riyom LGA, as well as Gana-Ropp community in Barkin Ladi LGA.

Giving the breakdown, the association said two persons were killed in Rim village of

Riyom Local Government Area, seven in Jol, and 11 in Kwi, while a clergyman, Reverend Nichodemus Kim, was killed in Gana-Ropp, Barkin Ladi LGA.

The attacks on Rim, Jol, and Kwi were simultaneously coordinated by the terrorists between 2:00p.m and 7:00p.m.

The statement revealed that in Kwi, an entire community, Hei-gwe, was completely burnt and over a 100 farmlands destroyed.

The statement further pointed out that in Gana-Ropp, the clergyman with the Church of Christ in Nations was attacked at about 8:00p.m. at his home, with the militias opening fire on him.

The statement reads: "It is a great concern that these communities, especially Rim, Jol, and Kwi, have come under attack several

times in the last two weeks, yet Sunday's attack went on for hours without the intervention of the Special Task Force, Operation Safe Haven (OPSH).

"More worrisome is the fact that Mahanga, which is the base of those terrorising these communities, is known, yet no effort has been made by security operatives to raid the place. Also, for over a decade now, the Special Task Force in the state has not addressed these killings.

"This has left us with concerns and questions as to whether the government can still keep to its primary responsibility of safeguarding lives and property."

It, therefore, called on the new administration, both at the federal and state levels, to come up with new strategies to address the security situation in the country, par-

ticularly in Plateau State.

When contacted, spokesman for the Plateau State police command, Alfred Alabo, confirmed the attacks.

He added that the command, led by the Commissioner of Police, Bartholomew Onyeka, was at the scene of the incident for an assessment of the situation.

He said the men of the command had been drafted to the affected communities.

In another development, a traditional ruler in Bokkos Local Government Area of Plateau State, the Mishkakam Mushere, Pah Joshua Makut, was kidnapped by gunmen from his palace on Sunday.

A source close to the palace of the traditional ruler informed the *Nigerian Tribune* that the gunmen forced their way into the palace of the monarch at about 10:30p.m. on Sunday and abducted him in the presence of his family.

The source said the gunmen forced the traditional ruler into a waiting vehicle and zoomed off before vigilantes and hunters in the community could put their acts together for a rescue operation.

A community leader, Haruna Ibrahim, said the gunmen carried out the operation within a spate of 10 minutes.

He added that they shot sporadically into the air when leaving to prevent anyone from coming to rescue the monarch, just as he revealed that the gunmen are yet to establish contact with the palace.

Meanwhile, Governor Caleb Muftwang, at a programme organised to celebrate Democracy Day in the state, confirmed the abduction of the traditional ruler on Monday.

He said security operatives

had swung into action to rescue him alive.

In another development, two herders were reportedly killed on Sunday by gunmen at Fas district of Riyom Local Government Area of the state.

Chairman of Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN) in the council area, Alhaji Bello Tafawa, told reporters that the herders were returning from rearing when the gunmen attacked them.

According to the MACBAN chairman, the names of the victims are Adam Sani Ahmad (33) and Musa Ibrahim (23).

He said: "Ahmad left behind six children, while Ibrahim left behind one child."

Spokesperson for the state police command, DSP Alabo Alfred, could not be reached for confirmation of the killing.