

Insecurity: Another 51 feared killed, several injured, houses burnt in Plateau community

•Killings in Benue, Plateau states, genocidal war —MBF

•Resolve underlying communal issues in your state, Tinubu tells Muftwang

•Killing is an inexcusable security failure - Amnesty International

From Isaac Shobayo
and Leon Usigbe

NO fewer than 54 persons were killed and several others injured by gunmen in a renewed onslaught on the people of the Zike Kimakpa community in Kwai District of Irigwe Chiefdom, Bassa Local Government Area of Plateau State.

The National Publicity Secretary, Irigwe Development Association (IDA), Samuel Jugo, confirmed that the 51 killed were given a mass burial on Monday amidst tears and wailing by relations and other sympathizers, who thronged the burial site.

This comes as the Middle Belt Forum (MBF) has declared that terrorist killings in Benue and Plateau States constitute a genocidal war and urged the governors of the two states to engage the federal government on the incident.

It will be recalled that over 60 people from five communities of the Bokkos local government area of the state were killed last week by the rampaging terrorists in a barbaric manner and as well sacked natives from their ancestral homes.

A source close to the community disclosed that the gunmen in large numbers rode into the area on motorbikes at about 11:32 pm on Sunday and went on a killing rampage till the early hours of Monday, killing no fewer than 51 persons, adding that most of those killed and injured were attacked in their separate homes.

It was further learnt that the gunmen suspected to be Fulani terrorists burnt down several houses in the deadly operation, while those who sustained fatal gunshot wounds are currently being treated at the Plateau State Specialist Hospital and Jos University Teaching Hospital.

Nigerian Tribune findings further revealed that as a re-

sult of the tragedy, residents of the neighbouring villages and communities have begun to relocate to Jos, the capital of the state, and other neighbouring local governments for protection.

The statement issued by IDA, signed by Jugo, depicted that on Sunday night, there were sporadic gunshots from multiple locations in the community, adding that on the following morning, 51 people were killed.

The statement highlighted that there were rumours before the attacks, and the security stationed in the area was notified, adding that the Sector 3 Commander confirmed the allegation and mobilised his men to Kwai, but the carnage still took place.

"This assault on a peace-loving people on their motherland is very provocative, vexing and undeserving. What is baffling residents most is the intent of the Drone Station in Kwai, which should have been deployed for reconnaissance when rumours filtered in," the statement added.

The association therefore called on the Federal Government and the Plateau State government to intervene before the already precarious situation snowballs into a major humanitarian catastrophe.

Reacting to the unfortunate incident, the National President of the Middle Belt Forum, Dr Butrus Pogu, said the killings in Benue and Plateau States were unacceptable, comparing the incidents in both states and other parts of the Middle Belt to a genocidal war to drive people away from their ancestral land.

He tasked the governors of the two states to be more aware of their responsibilities and engage the federal government, which is in charge of the military, the police and other paramilitary forces, to gain a better understanding of the killings.

He said: "The governors of Benue and Plateau States, who are chief security officers

of these states, should awake from their sleep. They should approach the federal government, which is in charge of the military, the police and all the paramilitary forces, and request permission to form a local security network. I hope Mr President will provide the governors the opportunity of complementing the Federal Government's efforts in this regard."

Dr Pogu said the government has for long tolerated a terrorist enclave known as Mahanga in Plateau State and that until the government takes the bull by the horns and flushes out the elements, killings in the state and other neighbouring states may continue.

"This Mahanga has been known as a terrorist enclave, serving as a launching pad for attacks in Benue, Nasarawa, and parts of Kaduna state. The stretch of the land also links up to Taraba State as well. This area should be combed, and weapons there retrieved."

"All these killings are a war on the Middle Belt; let the governor wake up and engage the federal government. This is unacceptable, and it cannot be swept under the carpet. All records and information we had over time point to Mahanga; the terrorist activities are being organised from there; the area should be uprooted."

"The people should not fold their arms and watch their brothers being massacred. Before now, our people survived with bows and arrows; self-defence is allowed in our constitution. These people are just after land grabbing and dispossessing people from their ancestral lands, and this should not be allowed," he said.

In the same vein, President Bola Tinubu has urged Governor Caleb Mutwang of Plateau State to summon the necessary political will to resolve the crisis in the state and establish enduring peace.

This is as he expressed profound sorrow over the recent

bloodshed on the Plateau, a tragedy that has claimed the lives of over 40 individuals.

A statement issued on Monday by Bayo Onanuga Special Adviser to the President (Information and Strategy) said Tinubu strongly condemned the violence and extended his sympathies to Governor Mutwang, the state government, and the people of Plateau State.

According to the statement, in his call for harmony among the people of Plateau State, President Tinubu emphasized the importance of love and unity beyond religious and ethnic lines.

He encouraged community, spiritual, and political leaders within and beyond the state to unite and end the cycle of retaliatory attacks that have made life unbearable for affected communities.

"The ongoing violence between communities in Plateau State, rooted in misunderstandings between different ethnic and religious groups, must cease," President Tinubu asserted.

"I have instructed security agencies to thoroughly investigate this crisis and identify those responsible for orchestrating these violent acts. We cannot allow this devastation and the tit-for-tat attacks to continue. Enough is enough."

"Beyond dealing with the criminal elements of these incessant killings, the political leadership in Plateau State, led by Governor Caleb Mutwang, must address the root cause of this age-long problem. These problems have been with us for more than two decades. We can no longer ignore the underlying issues. It is time to tackle them fairly and find a lasting solution. I have discussed these problems with the governor over time and offered suggestions for lasting peace."

"The Federal Government remains committed to supporting Governor Mutwang and the Plateau State government in promoting dialogue,

fostering social cohesion, and ensuring accountability—crucial steps towards permanently resolving the conflict in Plateau."

Responding to the attack on Zikke village of Bassa Local Government Area of Plateau State, Isa Sanusi, Director of Amnesty International Nigeria, said:

"Amnesty International strongly condemns the killing of at least 51 people between 12:00 a.m. and 1:00 a.m. last night when gunmen invaded Zikke village of Bassa LGA, Plateau State. Along the way, the gunmen also razed villages and looted homes, destroying everything in their path."

"Many of the victims of last night's deadly attack that could not run—including children and the elderly—were slaughtered and left in pools of blood. The inexcusable security lapses that enabled these horrific attacks, two weeks after the killing of 52 people, must be investigated." "Issuing bland statements condemning these horrific attacks is not enough. A genuine commitment to protecting the people must be demonstrated by ensuring adequate security of lives and property, as well

as ensuring justice for the victims. The consistent failure of the authorities to bring the actual suspected perpetrators to justice is emboldening impunity."

"While President Bola Tinubu claims his government is implementing new security measures to address the rising insecurity in the country, the recent attacks in Plateau State show that whatever security measures have been implemented are not working."

"In Plateau State, from December 2023 to February 2024, at least 1,336 people were killed. Of those killed, 533 were women, 263 were children and 540 were men. Over 29,554 people were displaced, out of which 13,093 were children and 16,461 were women."

"The patterns of recent deadly attacks on the rural areas of Plateau State clearly show the Nigerian authorities have left these communities at the mercy of rampaging gunmen. Nigerian authorities' failure to tame the tide of this horrific violence is costing people their lives and livelihoods, and without immediate action, many more lives may be lost."

Defamation: Kwara court grants Portable N1m bail

Biola Azeez | Ilorin

CONTROVERSIAL singer, Habeeb Okikiola Badmus, popularly known as Portable, has been granted bail in the sum of N1 million by an Upper Area Court sitting in Ilorin, following his arraignment on charges of criminal defamation, intimidation, inciting disturbance and cyber stalking.

The court on Monday ordered that the singer must provide two sureties in like sum as part of the bail conditions.

The bail conditions said

a petition by fellow artiste, Okunola Saheed, popularly known as Osupa, dated March 21, 2025.

The petition said that Portable, during a live Instagram broadcast on March 19, 2025, made defamatory remarks against Osupa, accusing him of jealousy and attempts to sabotage his career.

Osupa described the statements as damaging, inciting and an attack on his reputation, also claiming that the content had caused public tension and unrest.

Police investigators said