

Another four killed in fresh Jos attack

JUDE OWUAMANAM

LESS than 72 hours after five persons were mauled down in an evening attack on a school premises in Vom, near Jos, another four persons have been confirmed dead as a result of an early morning

attack in Shekan village in Bassa Local government of Plateau State.

The attack is coming less than 48 hours after the natives and the Fulani pastoralists signed a peace deal in Bassa

Our correspondent gathered that in the latest attack, an aged woman, and her husband were

beheaded by some unknown assailants, even as their two grandchildren were killed.

The assailants who allegedly stormed the village early Saturday morning were said to have gone with the heads of the victims.

Shekan village, a Berom settlement is a border settlement between Jos South and Bassa Local government areas

The state Police commissioner, Abdelrahman Akano, who confirmed the incident, however, said he suspected that the action was the handiwork of ritualists.

Akano said, "This particular killing has nothing to do with the normal Jos crises or attacks by Fulani herdsmen. It is purely a criminal act because no cattle was rustled in the attack. These criminals can be said to be ritual killers because they beheaded them and went away with their heads, we only found their headless bodies somewhere in the bush."

He said, "The village is under Bassa Local government, not Jos South because when the police picked their bodies and wanted to take them to Jos south, the villagers said the community is under Bassa Local government though it is a border settlement."

The police commissioner appealed to the people of Bassa Local government to maintain calm and should not link the incident to attack by Fulani.

"There is an existing peace agreement between the Fulanis and Irigwe tribes inhabiting Bassa local government that will continue to live in peace. The peace agreement was signed just last week and I don't want the people to abandon the peace agreement because of this incident because it has nothing to do with Jos crises"

The police commissioner said he had deployed policemen to the area to track down the suspected ritualists.

Why court can't stop our candidates — PDP

•Says flag not guarantee for party ticket

OLUSOLA FABIYI

THE Peoples Democratic Party has said it is convinced that court will not be able to stop any of the candidates it nominated for the April elections.

The party said since all its candidates were genuinely nominated, it would be difficult for the courts to nullify their nomination.

The National Legal Adviser of the party, Chief Olusola Oke, stated this in Abuja on Friday, just as the Federal High Court sitting in Awka has restrained the party from fielding some candidates in Anambra State.

Oke said since most orders from the courts were temporary, the party was sure that at the end of the day, those validly nominated by the party and whose names were sent to the Independent National Electoral Commission would still be allowed to contest the election.

He said, "We have no reason to disparage or be defiant to any court order, because we believe most of these orders that have been issued, they are temporary measures.

"On the ultimate, we are very strong on our position that the candidates we have nominated are all validly nominated. We believe that the courts would also see our points of view."

Asked why the party ignored court orders, which barred it from handing over

the court. Normally, but for these campaigns that our people are attending, at NWC meetings, I brief members on developments in courts, but I haven't been able to really make contacts.

"If anything has been done, which I am not personally aware, it must have been done out of the fact that they don't have the correct fact about the developments in court. In other words, our party believes in the rule of law."

Asked why he didn't reach them on their telephone lines, he said, "Yes, they can be reached on the telephone, but I haven't reached them. We have our regular ways of briefings, but we haven't been meeting."

He said the court did not ask the party not to handover flags to its members and that handing over the flags to its members was not enough to make them the party's candidates.

Oke said, "Handing over the flags is ceremonial, they aren't part of the orders of court, they are just internal affairs of the party.

"The flag of the party doesn't make you a candidate; what makes you a candidate is the nomination which has been completed since January 31.

"So, we can decide to give you our flag, nobody can restrain us from giving our flag, it isn't government property. There are one million flags there which anybody can take."

Anambra REC denies backing