



**Rich
Nigerians
sponsor us**
—Pipeline vandal
Pages 4 \$ 5

**CBN commences
revision of bank
charges**

P. 22

**175 vehicle tracking
companies
operating without
licence — Investigation**
P. 19

The PUNCH

THE MOST WIDELY READ NEWSPAPER

**Edo poll: INEC
defends deployment
of 3,500 soldiers**

P. 13

MONDAY, JULY 9, 2012 VOL 17 NO. 20,180 www.punchng.com

N150

Bloodbath in Plateau

- Gunmen kill Senator, others at mass burial
- Death toll in weekend attacks rise above 100

Page 2

news

Bloodbath in Plateau

Niyi Odebode,
Jude Onwuamanam
and Olalekan Adetayo

THE crisis in Jos, Plateau State, worsened on Sunday as suspected Fulani herdsmen murdered a serving Senator, a member of the state assembly and others at the mass burial of 63 victims of Saturday's attack.

The Senate confirmed the death of Senator Gyang Dantong and the Majority Leader of the Plateau State House of Assembly, Gyang Fulani.

"I can confirm that the Senator (Dantong) was a casualty of the attack. He was attending a burial of those who were killed on Saturday. We are also told that the Majority Leader of the House of Assembly of Plateau State was also killed," spokesman for the Senate, Eyinnaya Abaribe, told *The PUNCH* on Sunday.

Abaribe said the Senate would properly react to the incident later.

Expectedly, President Goodluck Jonathan on Sunday told security agencies to ensure that the killers of Dantong and the others were brought to book.

The President, who spoke through his spokesman, Reuben Abati, described the killings as "cruel and regrettable."

"We shall continue to re-invigorate our fight against terrorism and impunity and we are already taking concrete steps," Jonathan said.

The Senate President, David Mark, in a statement by his spokesman, Kola Ologbodiyan, described the death of Dantong as "shocking" and a "personal loss".

He said that government at all levels and security operatives must take appropriate action to stop "the senseless and incessant killings of innocent Nigerians".

Dantong, a medical doctor and member of the Peoples Democratic Party, was a two-term serving senator representing Bachit district in Riyom. He was also the Chairman of the Health Committee in the Senate till his death.

The Plateau State Government also confirmed the death of Dantong in a statement by the Special Adviser on Security to Governor Jonah Jang, Istifanus Gyang.

"A serving Senator and member of the state House of Assembly died following Fulani attack on mourners at a mass burial of 63 victims of a Fulani attack on over



• Sympathisers at late Senator Gyang Dantong's residence, in Jos ... on Sunday. Photo: NAN

nine villages the previous day (Saturday) at Gashish District of Bakin Ladi. Update on details of how they met their untimely death to follow later," Gyang said in the statement on Sunday.

Unofficial sources in Plateau on Sunday put the death toll of the attacks on Saturday and Sunday at over 100. The dead include civilians, soldiers and policemen killed on Saturday, and others who lost their lives during the attack on mourners at the mass burial.

The attackers reportedly swooped on Dantong and others, including a member of the House of Representatives representing Barakin Ladi/Riyom, Mr. Simon Mwadkom, during the mass burial.

Nwadkom, who was not hurt during the attack, later fainted. He was revived at the Barakin Ladi General Hospital.

Chairman of Barkin Ladi Local Government Area, Mr. Emmanuel Loman, was also a survivor of the attack though he reportedly sustained injury.

Two separate accounts of the attack

emerged on Sunday. While one had it that the lawmakers were killed while in a convoy to the burial site, the other said that the gunmen descended from the hills of Matse and attacked them at the burial site.

The corpses being buried as at the time of the attack were said to be those of women, children and the aged that had ran into a church on Saturday while fleeing from the Saturday attacks in Barakin Ladi.

Our correspondent in Jos learnt that the killers surrounded the Church of Christ in Nigeria, Matse, Riyom Local Government, and shot them dead. The killers thereafter set the building ablaze.

Loman had told our correspondent in Jos that the victims were holed up in the church before the attackers struck.

He said that he had just completed the mass burial of another 46 victims in three villages in Barakin Ladi when the gunmen struck.

A villager, who pleaded anonymity for fear of reprisal, told our correspondent that the villagers were in fear. "The situation is so terrible that it appears we don't have a government or security. We are left alone, at the mercy of the invaders," he said.

Fulani, who spoke to our correspondent shortly before he met his death, had expressed regret over the continued massacre in the state.

He described the attacks as a deliberate effort to exterminate his people.

He said, "It (Saturday) was a very dark day for the people of Gashish because terrorists numbering over 400 carried out a well planned attack on the quiet people of Gashish district, in Barakin Ladi Local Government Area.

"The attack was first reported at about 6.30am by the residents of the area, they had reported that their villages had been surrounded by attackers who were heavily

armed. The militants wore Army bullet-proof vests and camouflage. It is clearly a declaration of war on my people by these militants.

"I had some months ago on the floor of the Plateau House of Assembly called on the international community through the United Nations to provide protection for our people."

Director, Centre for the Advocacy of Justice and Rights, Mr. Gad Shamaki, in a statement in Jos on Sunday, said the killing of the lawmakers was an indictment on security agencies.

He said, "If the sad news we are hearing is true, that both Senator Dantong, and Fulani, the majority leader of the Plateau State House of Assembly were shot dead at a mass burial today (Sunday), then it is a clear indication of the inability of the State Task Force and the Federal Government to provide security for the citizens of Plateau State. And it is also a clear statement that we are no longer safe as a people in this country."

"We demand for the mass retirement of all security chiefs and for Mr. President to give us a road map on how he intends to solve the Plateaus crises and other issues of insecurity in the northern part of the country within two weeks.

"We use this opportunity to appeal to the people of Plateau State not to take the law into their hands."

The Special Task Force, in a statement said that 14 natives were killed while 21 of the assailants also died in a shootout between the STF and the gunmen. STF spokesman, Capt Salihu Mustapha, confirmed that the heavily armed attackers wore bullet proof vests while killing and burning houses.

Mustapha also said that two soldiers were killed in a shootout with the gunmen.

... Jang imposes curfew on four LGAs

PLAKEAU State Governor, Jonah Jang, has imposed a curfew on the four local government areas that made up the Northern senatorial zone of Plateau state.

This followed the killing of Senator Gyang Dantong and Mr. Gyang Fulani, by suspected Fulani herdsmen.

The LGAs are Jos North, Jos South, Barkin Ladi and Riyom.

A statement by the Commissioner for Information and Communication, Yiljap Abraham, said the measure was to prevent

further loss of lives and property.

The statement reads, "In view of the prevailing security situation, the Governor of Plateau State Dr. Jonah Jang is hereby imposing a curfew in the following areas: Jos North, Jos South, Barkin Ladi and Riyom LGAs with immediate effect.

"The curfew will start from 7.30 today (Sunday) to 7.00 tomorrow morning (Monday) while the curfew starts 6 pm Monday (today) to 7 am till further notice.