

81,000 Nigerians destitute, 73 dead from fresh herder-farmer clashes – UN

OLALEYE ALUKO

THE United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has said that more than 81,000 Nigerians are presently in need of assistance while 73 persons have been killed in fresh communal clashes, suspected to be linked to herders and farmers in Adamawa State.

The UN agency in a report said the persons were killed last Friday and Saturday in the Lamurde Local Government Area of Adamawa State, an area notorious for herdsmen attacks.

The UN report published on Tuesday and obtained by our correspondent said "urgent help and measures were needed to reach out to the population."

The report said, "Inter-communal clashes in Lamurde LGA claimed at least 73 lives on May 15 and 16. Also, some 75 people were injured in the clashes and are hospitalised. Homes, businesses and livestock were burnt or destroyed."

"Nearly 1,200 people were displaced by the clashes. The displaced populations are temporarily staying in school facilities, while the state government is establishing a camp to house them. The State Emergency Agency started delivering food assistance to the displaced on Sunday."

"The first clash on May 15 near Tingno town involved the Hausa and Chibo ethnic groups. Additional clashes broke out later on that day

in Sabon Layi and Bagashi communities and lasted until around noon on May 16. The root causes of the clashes are still being determined."

"OCHA is convening an emergency meeting with partners to mobilise immediate support for displaced populations and plan for a joint needs assessment. Lamurde LGA is a major flashpoint for perennial herder-farmer clashes and flooding. Currently, more than 81,110 people are estimated to be in need of humanitarian assistance in Lamurde LGA with three partners providing health and nutrition assistance."

The report added that the Adamawa State Emergency Management Agency conducted an assessment of the displaced population and the agency identified food, shelter and health care as the main needs.



L-R: Ekiti State Governor, Dr Kayode Fayemi; Head of Service, Mrs Peju Babafemi; and Chief Executive Officer, Oodua Infraco Resources Limited, Mr Sammy Adigun; during the signing of an MoU between Ekiti State Government and Oodua Infranco Resources Limited on internet broadband, at the Governor's Office in Ado- Ekiti... on Thursday. Photo: Ekiti State Government House

Reps to revisit Buhari's \$22.79bn loan request

LEKE BAIYEWU

THE House of Representatives will soon revisit the \$22.79bn external borrowing request by the President, Major General Muhammadu Buhari (ret'd.), to finance some critical projects in the 2020 Appropriation Act.

This is coming few weeks after the National Assembly approved N850bn internal loan sought by the President.

The Senate had on March 6 approved the loan amidst controversy. The Minority Leader, Senator Enyinnaya

Abaribe, had particularly led the protests against the process leading to the approval.

The House, which was billed to approve the loan in concurrence with the Senate, had however suspended its consideration of the request indefinitely.

The House had scheduled consideration of the report by the Committee on Aids, Loans and Debt Management on the 2016–2018 Federal Government External Borrowing (Rolling) Plan for March 11 and it was listed as the last item on the order paper for day's proceedings.

The Speaker, Femi

Gbajabiamila, however, asked that the consideration be stood down without giving a new date.

Gbajabiamila later disclosed on March 18 that the protest by National Assembly members from the South-East geopolitical zone led to the suspension of work on the loan. "I know there has been a lot of agitation about South-East not benefiting from the loan. It is one of the reasons we haven't considered the loan in the House," he said.

The Speaker said the House was already in talks with the Federal Government officials on how the zone would be accommodated in the execution of projects with the loan.

with Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Zainab Ahmed; and the Director General of the Budget Office of the Federation, Ben Akabueze, to find a solution to the issue.

Majority Leader of the House, Alhassan Ado-Dogwu, in a response to an enquiry by our correspondent on the status of the presidential request via a text message, said the consideration and approval were delayed due to new developments in the economy.

Ado-Dogwu said, "We have significantly reviewed the 2020 budget to make it realisable.

world over. Some of the borrowing plan requests by the Federal Government are passed (by the House) because we need to make up our national finances to fill in the gaps created by the COVID-19 pandemic and global oil market.

"We have passed the N850bn facility but the \$22.7bn facility is stepped down for now, pending further consultations by agencies of government and National Assembly."

Chairman of the House Committee on Finance, Mr James Faleke, while responding to the same enquiry, also said,