

# ① Jukun/Tiv crisis: Fear in Taraba as death toll hits 17

THE people of Taraba State are crouching in fear following continuous attacks and killings in the crisis involving Jukun and Tiv people.

The crisis, which began in Kente village of Wukari Local Government Area – the southern part of the state in April last year, has now spilled to seven councils.

The latest violence is taking place in Bali and Gashaka councils of Central zone of the state. Governor Darius Ishaku and his counterpart in Benue State, Samuel Ortom, have not been able to stop the killings.

Death tolls in separate attacks on communities yesterday rose to 17. Over 240 residents were displaced and their homes razed.

Police spokesman, David Misal, confirmed the attacks and killings to *The Nation* on telephone. "Yes, there were incidents of attack. But I am yet to get the details," he said.

In Maigoge settlement of Bali council alone, four persons were feared killed. Two others were gunned down and doz-

By Fanen Ihyongo, Jalingo

ens wounded in Ananum and Akate areas of Donga, witnesses said.

Othaniel Amah, a pastor, said he escaped death narrowly. But his home was torched during the attack.

"My family and I escaped death by the whiskers, but the entire village has been razed. All our belongings have been burnt in the attack suspected to have been carried out by Jibawa Jukun militia groups," he said.

He cried onto security agencies to stop the escalation of hostilities. "Lives and property are being wasted," he said.

Caretaker Chairman of Bali, Mahmud Musa, confirmed the killings in Maigoge. He said four people were killed and six houses burnt in the attack.

Musa disclosed that an 11-man peace and reconciliation committee has been set up in the local council to ensure there is ceasefire.

"We have just finished a security meeting where all the stakeholders have agreed to work towards peace.

"But the only thing that will calm the situation now is the deployment of security. So, we have deployed Civil Defense personnel to Maigoge. But we need more security.

"I have informed the Deputy Governor, Haruna Manu, on the need to draft security to the affected areas and we do hope he will do the needful," he said.

Yakubu Ali, a resident of Akate, said he lost two persons in an attack on Tse Mende and Iornem villages -near Akate in Donga Local Government Area.

Ali said gunmen in numbers attacked Ananum village and burnt the remaining structures that were standing, after an earlier attack had sacked multitudes in the area.

Caretaker Chairman of Donga, Nashuka Ipeyen, said

the body of one person was recovered near Akate. He blamed the killing on Tiv militants.

"Just this morning, Tiv people attacked and killed one person in Akate. It's unfortunate they have been attacking Jukun communities since the last peace meeting," Ipeyen said.

But the President of Tiv Youth Council, Kelvin Katyo, accused the Donga Council Chairman of speaking for the Jukun.

"Ipeyen is an interested party and has turned himself into a Jukun youth leader. Why is he always not aware anytime there is an attack on a Tiv community?

"Nobody is happy with the crisis. It's now clear that the agenda to evict the Tiv out of Taraba has reached an advanced stage and we are calling on the federal government to intervene," Katyo said.

Police spokesman, David Misal, who confirmed the killings to *The Nation*, said policemen have gone there to quell hostilities and get the details, after which he will brief the press.



# Death toll in Taraba attack rises to 17

JUSTIN TYOPUUSU

**T**HE death toll in the attack on Taraba communities has risen to 17, following fresh attacks on Maigoge and Maihula in Bali Local Government Area and Ananum and Akate communities in Donga LGA which claimed additional six lives.

Residents said four persons were killed in Maigoge and two in Akate villages of Bali and Donga LGAs, respectively.

This is even as residents of Maihula in Bali Local Government Area said gunmen from Wurbo community attacked and burnt their community on Saturday.

Pastor Nathaniel Amah whose house was razed during the attack on Maihula told our correspondent that many houses were destroyed.

"My family escaped death by a whisker, but the entire village has been razed. All our belongings have been burnt in the attack suspected to have been carried out by Jibawa (Jukun) militia.

"We are calling on the security agencies to stop the escalation of the attacks as lives and property are being wasted," he said.

Caretaker Chairman of Bali Local Government Area, Mahmud Musa told *Sunday PUNCH* that four persons were killed in the attack at Maigoge.

Musa added that six houses were burnt in the attack which happened on Saturday morning.

He, however, said he was not aware of the attack at Maihula.

He noted that an 11-man peace and reconciliation committee had been set up to restore peace in the area.

"We just finished a security meeting where all the stakeholders have agreed to work towards peace.

"But the only thing that will calm the situation now is the deployment of security. We have

deployed civil defence personnel in Maigoge, but we need more security men.

"I have communicated with the Deputy Governor, Mr Haruna Manu, on the need for the deployment of security and we do hope he will do the needful," he said.

Meanwhile, a resident of Akate, Mr Yakubu Ali, said two persons were killed at Tse Mende and Iornem villages close to Akate in Donga council.

Ali said gunmen in their numbers also attacked Ananum village and burnt the remaining structures still standing after the first attack on the village last month.

But the Donga Caretaker Chairman, Nashuka Ipeyen, said

only one person was killed in the attack near Akate.

He denied knowledge of the attack on Ananum, saying, "I am just hearing of the attack on Ananum from you. Nobody has informed me about the said attack on Ananum.

"Just this morning, Tiv people attacked and killed one person in Akate. It's unfortunate that Tiv people don't want this crisis to end.

"They have been attacking Jukun communities since the last peace meeting. Even when our youth want to go on reprisals, we stopped them," he said.

But in a swift reaction, the President of Tiv Youth Council, Kelvin Katyo, accused Nashuka of speaking only for the Jukun "as

if he was the Chairman of Jukun and not the people of Donga."

He added, "Nashuka is an interested party and has turned himself into a Jukun youth leader. Why is he always not aware anytime there is an attack on a Tiv community?

"Nobody is happy with what is happening. It's now clear that the agenda to evict the Tiv from Taraba (State) has reached an advance stage and we are calling on the Federal Government to intervene before we are wiped out of Taraba."

The Police Public Relations Officer in the state, ASP David Misal, could not be reached to confirm the reported killings at the time of filing this report.

## Lagos accredits three private hospitals for COVID-19 treatment

SODIQ OYELEKE

**L**AGOS State Government has accredited three private hospitals to manage COVID-19 cases in the state.

A statement from the Lagos State Ministry of Health quoted the Commissioner for Health, Prof. Akin Abayomi, as disclosing this at a news briefing to give situation report on COVID-19 management in the state.

Abayomi stressed that one of the accredited private hospitals was already admitting patients, adding that the other two would soon start admission and management of patients.

He said, "They have passed the biosecurity compliance test. They have made modifications to their hospitals so that their staff and other patients are not put in danger or exposed to a higher risk of contracting COVID-19.

"Those private hospitals

have passed the test and we are just in the process of issuing them accreditation certificates so that they can start managing COVID-19 patients in the private sector.

"However, even if they are managing COVID-19 in the private sector, it still comes under the supervision of the Lagos State Government Ministry of Health.

"Also, information about every patient managed by the hospitals must be made available to us so that we can record it in our database.

"COVID-19 remains a public crisis and all public crises are managed and supervised by the Lagos State Government and by extension the Federal Government of Nigeria," Abayomi said.

The names of the private facilities were not given in a copy of the press release obtained by our correspondent.

Meanwhile, Abayomi described as illegal the

management of COVID-19 patients by private facilities in the state without the knowledge and approval of the government.

The commissioner stressed that every COVID-19 patient in the state must be known to the government for adequate data capturing.

He said, "If you are managing COVID-19 without government permission and we are not capturing your cases in our database, you are performing an illegal act, according to the laws of Lagos State.

"So, if you want to manage COVID-19 in Lagos State, we are not saying you cannot. All you need to do is to submit an application and we will visit your facility to ensure that you have the required equipment and specialised personnel to manage COVID-19 cases. If you can demonstrate that you can do all these, then we will give you the approval to manage the disease."