

Plateau villagers protest as gunmen kill two youths

Published [January 12, 2021](#)



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Several members of Rim and Bachi communities in the Riyom Local Government Area of Plateau State on Monday stormed the office of the Divisional Police Officer in the council area to demand justice for two youths killed by gunmen in the locality.

The villagers accused personnel of the special task force in charge of maintaining peace in the state of being responsible for the attack on the victims, identified as Jerry Bitrus, 28, and Joseph Davou, 32.

The incident, it was learnt, happened on Sunday around 7.09pm.

The two friends were said to be riding on a motorcycle to Kuru community in Jos South when they were killed.

Joseph's father, Dachia Davou, and the village head of Rim, Gyang Dahoro, narrated to the DPO how the victim was shot dead a few minutes after he visited home to see his wife who gave birth to a baby some days back.

Dachia said, "My son was going back to Kuru in Jos LGA where he lived on his motorcycle. This was after visiting us in Bachi when he was told that his wife was delivered of a baby.

"Those who saw him said he picked his friend on the way to Kuru and as they were riding, they saw a Hilux van belonging to men of the STF and decided to follow behind the vehicle filled with the task force personnel in the belief that they would be protected because it was getting dark.

"A few minutes later, some gunshots were heard along the road at Rim village and those who rushed to the scene saw my son lying dead with bullet wounds, while his friend died on the way to a hospital.

"It was one of those who rushed to the scene of the attack that called me using my late son's phone which they recovered from his pocket."

The lawmaker representing Riyom constituency in the state House of Assembly, Timothy Dantong, said, "Our concern is how the victims could be shot dead under such a circumstance when they were following the patrol team of the STF for safety. If they were not the ones (STF), as the villagers who saw them insisted, then who perpetrated the dastardly act? I have called the sector commander of the STF in charge of the LGA and he told me that the matter had not been reported to him. All we want is justice."

The DPO in the LGA, Ibrahim Umar, promised to investigate the incident.

Umar said, “When I heard about the killing, I sent my men to the scene. Now that the people are accusing the STF personnel of being responsible, I will make sure that the matter is investigated to establish the veracity of the allegation.”

The corpses of the two victims were recovered from the Vom Christian Hospital, where they were initially deposited, and moved to the Jos University Teaching Hospital for autopsies.