

Seven bodies recovered, eight missing after Taraba bus attack

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| By Justin Tyopuusu

The Commissioner of Police, Taraba State Command, Mr David Iloyonomon, stated on Wednesday that his men found seven dead bodies in the bush while on patrol to control rising tension between Ichen and Tiv in the Donga Local Government Area of the State.

The commissioner informed journalists that trouble started on Tuesday when Ichen youths from Mararaba area of Donga reported to the Police Area Command in the area that a Pastor and his church member were missing while on their way to the church.

According to him, the youth had on the same day, at about 3pm, found the decomposing bodies of the missing persons and started attacking the Tiv residents in the town.

Attacked bus

"It took the efforts of our men to rescue some of the Tiv people to Takum for safety.

"Today, while our men were on patrol to maintain law and order and to ensure that peace returns, they found seven dead bodies including five women, a man, and a baby. The corpses have been evacuated to the police station," he said.

Our correspondent had earlier reported that 15 persons including women and children were missing after armed men suspected to be vigilante

personnel attacked an 18-seater-bus conveying passengers from Zaki/Biam in Benue State to Maihula in the Bali Local Government Area of Taraba State on Tuesday.

It was gathered that the incident happened at Gankwe village on Donga-Mararaban-Baissa road in the Donga Local Government Area of the state.

Narrating the incident to journalists on the phone, the driver of the bus, Mr Mpuuga Mbaave, who escaped death by a whisker with machete cut wounds, said the armed men in vigilante uniform attacked his bus.

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“I loaded 18 passengers from Zaki/Biam in Benue State to Maihura in Taraba State, and on our way close to Mararaba, I saw many people in vigilante uniform. I suspected something was wrong and I parked the vehicle.

“One of the villagers who was passing by told me that I should proceed. According to him, two members of the vigilante personnel were killed by kidnappers and the vigilante came to carry their corpses.

“As I moved closer, some of the vigilante personnel started shouting, ‘kill all of them,’ ‘kill all of them,’ it’s their people (Tiv) that killed our members, and they started attacking the passengers and cutting them with machetes.

“They ordered the passengers out of the bus, and forced them to lie face down. I refused to come down, but when I discovered that it was getting out of hand, I decided to jump out of the bus and ran away. My conductor too followed me. They came after us cutting us with machetes, but we ran for our dear lives,” he narrated.

Confirming the development, the Chairman of Donga Local Government Council, Ezra Voka, said he was already in the nearby forest in search of the missing persons.

“Please, my friend, I am already in the bush in search of the missing people. We cannot talk much now until I get more information from here,” he said.

The driver has since recovered his bus to safety and is currently receiving treatment at an undisclosed hospital in Donga.