

Two killed, 20 farms destroyed in fresh Plateau attack

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| By James Abraham

Two people have been killed and two others injured in a fresh attack in the Bassa Local Government Area of Plateau State.

The attack, which occurred on Wednesday morning, was reportedly carried out by Fulani militias who ambushed three Irigwe youths.

The National Publicity Secretary of the Irigwe Youths Movement, Joseph Yonkpa, who confirmed the killings, identified the victims who lost their lives as Adamu Bala, 38, and Gado Trra, 45.

Yonkpa said one of the victims survived the attack with bullet injuries and is currently receiving treatment in a hospital.

He said a military personnel was also injured during the ambush, adding that the attack resulted in the destruction of over 20 farms.

Yonkpa said, “This morning, three of our people were ambushed by Fulani militias. Two died instantly, and one survived with bullet injuries and is currently hospitalised in an undisclosed location.

“Those killed are Adamu Bala, 38 years, and Gado Trra, 45 years. Additionally, a military personnel sustained bullet injuries during the ambush. Over 20 farms were destroyed.”

The spokesman for the Plateau State Police Command, Alabo Alfred, could not be reached for comment on the incident as calls put across to his mobile phone rang out.

Meanwhile, over 300 cattle were reportedly rustled on Tuesday evening around Jouckchal community in Panyam district of Mangu Local Government Area of Plateau State.

The Secretary of Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria in Mangu, Musa Muhammad, told journalists in Jos that the incident occurred around 4:30 pm when the cattle were grazing in the area.

The secretary said the rustlers stormed the area in large numbers, shooting sporadically as the herders fled for their lives.

“The cattle, over 300, belonging to three persons, including Jeji Boro with 130, Shagari Manu with 70, and Tambaya Jouckchal with 103, were taken by the attackers,” Muhammad said.

According to the secretary, they informed the Commander of Sector 8 of Operation Safe Haven, the DPO, OC DSS, and the Chairman of Mangu LGA about the incident.

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He added that the Sector 8 Commander had deployed troops on Tuesday night to trail the perpetrators, saying that “only 5 out of the 300 cattle were tracked by the security so far.”

Muhammad accused Mwaghavul youths of rustling the cattle and called on security agencies to recover the stolen cattle and address the ongoing attacks, stressing their commitment to peaceful coexistence.

The spokesperson for Operation Safe Haven, Major Samson Zhakom, had yet to respond to the development as of press time.

But the National President of the Mwaghavul Development Association, Bulus Dabit, in a reaction, denied the allegation made by the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association that the Mwaghavul people rustled 300 of their cows.

Dabit described cattle rustling as a criminal activity that should be investigated by security agencies, rather than being attributed to a particular tribe.

“Cattle rustling is not a tribal activity, but rather a criminal act that requires investigation and prosecution,” he said, expressing concern that the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association’s allegations on social media are “overheating the system” and stereotyping the Mwaghavul people as thieves.

He urged the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association to report any incidents of cattle rustling to security agencies for investigation, rather than taking to social media.

Dabit questioned the plausibility of the allegations, asking where the Mwaghavul people would keep 300 cows if they had indeed rustled them.

“I have always told them that cattle rustling is not a tribal activity. It is an activity of criminals. I don’t know about what they are saying, but assuming without conceding that, I’m not thinking of 300, but even if it is one cow that is missing, it is big enough for security agencies to investigate. When something like that happens, they should stop talking about it on social media. They should report to the security agencies to investigate because this social media activity that they are doing is not helping matters. It is making our people very angry because they feel they have been stereotyped as thieves. It is the work of the security agents to unravel any criminal activity and it is equally wrong and criminal to stereotype another group and say that the whole Mwaghavul people are stealing their cows. We live in a very small place. Where can we keep 300 cows? I think this kind of discussion coming from the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association is overheating the system and they should do away with it.”

Meanwhile, the secretary disclosed that the death toll from the alleged cattle poisoning around the INEC office on Tuesday morning in the same Mangu LGA had risen to 36, with an additional ten cattle dying between Tuesday night and Wednesday morning.

The secretary lamented the losses, recalling that on April 9, 60 cattle were rustled in Murish community in the same LGA, and the herder tending to them remains missing.

MACBAN, however, called on security agencies to recover the stolen cattle and address the ongoing attacks, stressing their commitment to peaceful coexistence.