

13 slain Kaduna travellers buried in Plateau

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Governor of Plateau State, Caleb Mutfwang

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Thirteen victims of Friday night's mob attack in Mangun District of Mangu Local Government Area, Plateau State, have been laid to rest in Mangu and Quaapan Local Government Areas of the state, respectively.

It was learnt that while nine were laid to rest at Hayi Muslim Cemetery in Mangu on Saturday, four others whose corpses were recovered were taken to Quaapan and buried on Sunday.

The Chief Imam of Jama'atu Izalatil Bid'a Wa'ikamatis Sunnah, in Mangu, Suleiman Haruna, who led the prayers for the deceased in Mangu, confirmed the development on Sunday.

He said, "Yes, the deceased have been buried. Eight persons and another person who later gave up the ghost were buried in Mangu yesterday (Saturday), but four other persons who were later recovered were moved to Quaapan and were buried today (Sunday)."

PUNCH Online reports that the deceased, including women and children, were part of a 31-member group from the Basawa community in Zaria, Kaduna State, travelling in an 18-seater Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria bus en route to Qua'an Pan LGA for a wedding when they were attacked by hoodlums.

They reportedly lost their way and stopped to ask for directions when they were attacked.

The burial took place amid tight security.

Religious leaders said the victims' families consented to the burial in Plateau to avoid tension in their home communities.

Before the funeral prayers, Sheikh Suleiman Haruna, who led the rites, urged residents to accept the incident as the will of Allah and refrain from seeking revenge.

He praised security agencies and local leaders for responding quickly to the crisis.

Recall that the Governor of Plateau State, Caleb Mutfwang, had condemned the mob attack, expressing deep shock and sorrow over the tragic mob action.

Mutfwang, who visited the survivors in the hospital and the scene of the incident, expressed grief and described the mob action as totally condemnable and avoidable.

He noted with sadness that the Mangun District and adjoining districts of Chakfem in Mangu LGA and Mushere in Bokkos LGA have, for over a month, suffered coordinated terrorist assaults resulting in daily casualties and mass displacements, plunging communities into mourning and distress.

However, he emphasised that the prolonged attacks do not justify such a senseless act against innocent commuters.

Speaking at the scene of the incident, Mutfwang said, "I never imagined such a senseless act of violence could occur within our borders, especially considering the commendable efforts of our youths in this community and neighbouring districts who have consistently risen to support security agencies in defending against criminal incursions.

"It is deeply disheartening that the same youths who have shown courage and patriotism would turn around and take the law into their own hands.

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"This is utterly unacceptable, and the government will not sweep it under the carpet. We are working to build a Plateau that is welcoming to all and hospitable to visitors.

"We have been educating our young people about the importance of allowing free passage on all roads across the state, and this incident has come to us as a rude shock.

"I want to reassure Nigerians that Plateau remains a safe place for all travellers. I have spoken with my colleague, the Executive Governor of Kaduna State, to brief him on this unfortunate incident. I have also reached out to His Royal Highness, the Emir of Zazzau, to express my heartfelt condolences over this tragic loss of lives. In the spirit of solidarity, we will be sending a high-level delegation to commiserate with the Government and people of Kaduna State as well as the Zazzau Emirate."

The governor extended his condolences to the bereaved families and the government and people of Kaduna State, stressing that such acts of violence have no place in a civilised society.

While acknowledging the pain and frustration of communities under siege, he warned against resorting to jungle justice or mob action regardless of provocation.

He directed the General Hospital in Mangu and all other medical facilities attending to the victims to provide optimal care, assuring them that the Plateau State Government would bear the full cost of treatment.

The governor reaffirmed his administration's commitment to standing with the victims and their families during this difficult time.

Mutfwang also charged security agencies to conduct a thorough investigation into the incident, ensure that justice is served, and implement proactive measures to prevent any recurrence.

He reiterated that Plateau people are renowned for their hospitality, peaceful disposition, and acceptance of others and pledged to uphold those cherished values under his leadership.

In a gesture of solidarity, the governor has constituted a high-powered delegation to visit the Kaduna State Government and the families of the deceased in Zaria to convey the heartfelt condolences of the Government and people of Plateau State.

Mutfwang also used the opportunity to condemn the ongoing wave of killings and destruction in rural communities across Bokkos, Mangu, Riyom, Barkin Ladi, and Bassa Local Government Areas, which have led to widespread displacement and a worsening humanitarian crisis.

On behalf of the government and the peace-loving people of Plateau State, the governor extended sincere sympathies to all those affected, prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured, and sought divine comfort for the bereaved.

Kaduna State Governor, Senator Uba Sani, condemned the killings as "barbaric and senseless," calling on security agencies to swiftly arrest and prosecute the perpetrators.

He also urged his Plateau counterpart, Mutfwang, to take decisive action in coordinating justice efforts.

He assured Kaduna residents that the state government is supporting the victims' families and ensuring that the 11 survivors receive adequate medical care at Mangu General Hospital.