

Herdsman attacks: Death toll rises to 55 in Taraba

• 29 corpses recovered from burnt houses

From **Sylvanus Viashima,**
Jalingo

ANGUISH, misery and tears, flowed freely yesterday in Lau Local Government Area of Taraba State as dozens of victims of the Fulani herdsmen attacks on the Lau communities were given a mass burial. The burial was for 29 corpses recovered from burnt houses while the death toll of those killed by Fulani herdsmen rose to 55, yesterday. The invasion and attacks began at the weekend.

The Nigeria Police Force in the state and other security agencies provided cover for people to bury their dead in the midst of mounting tensions and hostilities.

Police Public Relations Officer, ASP David Misal, who confirmed this, said 12 bodies were recovered and given

mass burial, while the men of the command provided security to avoid further attacks.

However, the Senior Special Assistant to Governor Darius Ishaku, Mr Bala Dan Abu, and other sources said as many as 29 bodies, mostly women, children and the aged, were recovered and buried following the weekend attacks on the communities.

Dan Abu said: "A combined team of armed soldiers and policemen provided security cover to enable them complete the funeral rites. Most of those killed were women, children and the aged who could not escape the gun and knife wielding herdsmen, who invaded their communities last Friday."

Mr Peter Yohana, who lost his aged mother to the attackers, described the killers as most inhuman beings he

had ever seen in his life.

He also disclosed that over 55 people were killed in the attack, while several others are still missing with over 200 homes and several farms destroyed.

"It is unbelievable that anyone would just attack you and kill even your aged mother without any provocation. This is inhuman. The sight of my mother's body so dishonorably buried would continue to hunt me. It is so painful," Yohana said in tears.

Meanwhile, the member representing Lau at the state House of Assembly, Mr Joseph Albasu, condemned the attacks, describing it as inhuman, brutal and totally unacceptable.

Albasu, who went round the affected villages, said the level of destruction was

alarming and typical of a well orchestrated attack, aimed at ethnic cleansing.

While calling on the government to do the needful to stop such wanton killings and destruction, he also urged the people to remain law abiding and avoid anything that would lead to further breakdown of law and order in the area.

The Lau attack is the latest act of unprovoked aggression against communities in Taraba State by Fulani herdsmen.

Although the police have assured of improved security arrangement in the area, *Daily Sun* gathered that most of the people in neighbouring villages have also fled their homes for fear of further attacks as herdsmen have literally taken over the local government area.

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From **Noah Ebile**