

Blood flows again in Adamawa

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From **Billy Graham**, Yola

a gang of Fulani herdsmen again launched an attack on Dasso community, Numan Local Government Area of Adamawa State. The herdsmen not only harmed their victims in their rage but set ablaze several houses and valuables as they left the community desolate.

The fresh attack set up a feeling of palpable fear among the lucky survivals of the mayhem. Women now talk in whispers while their men walk with extreme caution, not very sure whether the dreaded bandits have come and gone.

Although the exact casualty figure of last Saturday's tragic incident is yet to be established as at press time, it was gathered that some members of the community were gunned down by the marauders.

Moses Daniel, Rector, Bishop Timothy Kwata Spiritual Seminary, Bare, gave account of the incident. He said the attack took place on

Saturday at about 2 00 pm, recalling that on the fateful day, some herdsmen had encroached on some farmlands, but were successfully chased away by the villagers:

“However, the herders re-mobilised and returned to these farms with dangerous weapons, shooting indiscriminately at everybody on sight.

They overpowered the community and chased everyone away. After the community members had fled, they then burnt down almost every house, every single house. We had to evacuate our seminarians to Numan.

“There was an attack on July 2, 2018, that drove out many members of the community. We have been living here like that with the seminarians with few security men. We applied for security and they were deployed to man this place, but they were later withdrawn.

“They attempted this attack last week’s Monday, but we got wind of it and reported it to the security agencies, who came and helped us. This time around, they just came in with all kinds of guns and chased everyone away. I will like to call on the government to do something about it. We have reported the issue to the police, the DSS, and the Brigade Commander, and I have copies of the letters written to all of them.

“Except for some soldiers who were deployed here and two of them were shot by the herdsmen, who took pride in retelling the villagers that they have, in the past, killed soldiers and nothing was done by the authorities.”

Linus Gajere, the village head of Dasso gave his own account of the incident: “This trouble began when some of our community members found some Fulani herders moving their cattle into their farms. When the people challenged them they began fighting and later re-mobilised themselves and burnt down our village.

“Most of my villagers have escaped into the town and are now living without shelters, clothing or food to eat. We have been made refugees in our own father’s land.” He prayed the government, both state and federal, to intervene and help his people while appealing for assistance for those displaced by this conflict: “We also want them to apprehend these people attacking us.”

A resident, Eusebius Dennis, narrated their ordeal: “There is no food, or clothes or any of our personal properties because they have been burnt down. We have lost everything. We don’t have the kind of weapons they have.

“We just used our bows and arrows to defend ourselves, but they were not enough. This is not the first time this sort of tragedy is descending on us. We are calling on government to come to our aid.”

Gregory Joniel a seminarian said: “We were alerted of an attack by the Fulani on this community where our school based. On seeing that the Fulani were advancing and some sections of our school were being burnt down, our Rector relocated us to here.”

A very striking dimension to these attacks is its implications for the forthcoming polls. Communities such as Numan, Demsa, Lamurde and Girei are not sure the atmosphere would be clement enough for them to cast their votes.

Observers fear that thousands of the members of the communities may be disenfranchised.

“They may elect to stay away rather than come and exercise their franchise,” said James Abraham, a program officer with a non-governmental organisation in the region.

The state Resident Electoral Commissioner, Kassim Gaidam, observed that some parts of Southern Adamawa are still under observation given the security situation in the area.

The state Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Othman Abubakar, said: “We are aware of the attack in Bare. We have already deployed our personnel to deal with the situation.”

The Commissioner for Information, Ahmed Sajoh, said:

“We have spoken with the security agencies to quickly deploy the task force that is around Numan. We have also spoken to ADSEMA to address the humanitarian concerns that have arisen as a result of the crisis.

“We have adopted some strategies that have mitigated the situation. We are also reviewing the state security architecture to ensure that these incidents become a thing of the past. “This attack is one too many. We plead with the community to bear with government as we are doing all we can to ensure they return to their homes.”