

Herdsmen kill 11, injure 19 in Plateau community

3rd April 2022

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From Gyang Bere, *Jos*

About eleven people were brutally murdered with 19 others sustaining gunshots injuries when gunmen suspected to be Fulani herdsmen attacked the Irigwe people during their annual festival 'Zerreci' in Bassa Local Government Area of Plateau State.

The bloody incident occurred at about 11 pm, *Daily Sun* when the people were at the ritual ground Chando 'Zerreci' to perform the exercise, *Daily Sun* has learned.

Zerreci is an annual festival to usher in the rainy season and prepare locals for the farming season.

Military Information Officer Major Ishaku Takwa confirmed the incident, saying there had been a shooting around Rafiki community on Sunday morning which their attention was drawn to.

He explained that troops of Operation SAFE HAVEN have been deployed to the area and would make public any information.

National Publicity Secretary Irigwe Youth Movement (IYM) Lawrence Zongo confirmed that the victims were attacked and killed by gunshots while others were hacked with machetes.

'There was an attack by militants normally referred by government authorities as "Unknown Gunmen" on 2nd, April 2022 at about 11 pm at the ritual ground Chando Zerreci in Bassa Local Government Area of Plateau State,' Zongo stated.

'10 people were killed and 19 persons survived gunshots injuries, they are undergoing medical treatment at Enos Hospital Miango, others are in various hospitals in Jos.'

The National President of IYM, Ezekiel Bini, described the attacks as barbaric and unfortunate given that the warring communities, the natives and the Fulani have signed a peace accord, facilitated by the state government to foster peaceful co-existence.

He called for the quick intervention of relevant government authorities to ensure that the terror group which has vowed to wipe out the Irigwe people is arrested to halt the killings.

Bini recalled that over 10 persons were killed in March in the Irigwe villages while food crops and other valuables were destroyed and burnt down by violent herdsmen.

'We solicit the urgent intervention of both federal and state government in halting the situation. But we have viewed with dismay how the government has failed to protect lives and properties where the villagers are left at the mercy of the gunmen,' he said.

Bini alleged that the military had compromised under the Commander of Operation SAFE HAVEN and General Officer Commanding 3rd Division, Maj Gen Ibrahim Ali

He accused the commander of not taking deliberate action to halt the killings, despite the early warning signs that were glaring and visible.

‘The Nigerian government has a responsibility to promote and protect human rights, including the right to life, and a duty to protect civilians from attacks by taking effective measures to prevent attackers from invading rural communities, particularly the Rigwe people,’ he said.

‘The government must as a matter of urgency investigate the attack in Rigwe land and bring the perpetrators to justice and ensure families and other victims are adequately compensated.’

He pleaded with the international community to come to the aid of the Rigwe people and to support them with humanitarian aid.

He called on US President Joe Biden to come to the aid of Christians in Nigeria suffering persecution and other human rights violations, including their right to life.

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