



NEWS

Again, gunmen kill six, set church ablaze in Plateau



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No fewer than six people were again killed in Plateau State at the weekend even as a church was set ablaze in a renewed attack on the state. The attack, which resulted in the killing of six and the burning of a church, took place in Marabar Kantoma, a village located along the boundary of Mangu and Barkin Ladi Local Government Areas in Plateau State.

A source in the village said the attack occurred at about 1a.m on Saturday night when gunmen believed to be Fulani herdsmen invaded the village, shooting sporadically. A child to a pastor in the village was killed in the attack along with five others, the source said. One church belonging to the Church of Christ in Nations (COCIN) was equally razed in the attack that lasted for hours, it was learnt.

But the military joint task force, Operation Safe Haven (OPSH), deployed to restore law and order in Plateau, Bauchi and southern Kaduna yesterday confirmed the killing of four people by gunmen in Dorowa village of Barkin Ladi Local Government Area of the state. Spokesman of the task force, Major Adam Umar in a statement made available to journalists in Jos said: “OPSH notes with dismay the continued attitude of some criminal elements in Plateau State to make the state ungovernable through some unwarranted attacks on some communities and the innocent villagers despite the tireless efforts of the operation.

“We regret to say that at about 03 00 hours on Sunday, our men at Dorowa received a distress call from a resident of Maraban Kantoma in Barkin Ladi that they were under attack by some armed bandits, our men mobilised to the scene and repelled the attackers, the assailants who were given a hot chase by our men escaped with varying degree of injuries, while four of them were arrested.

However, it is regrettable that before our men could get to the scene of the attack, four persons had already been killed by the attackers. However, President of the Church of Christ in



Nations, Rev. Dachollom Datiri, accused the Special Tasks Force (STF) in the state of failing in their responsibility to protect lives and property of the people.

Datiri in a statement signed by his Public Relations and Protocol Officer, Rev. Justin Ahmadu and issued to journalists said the church had had enough of the government's insensitivity; and if nothing would be done to salvage the situation and restore hope among the already desperate populace, the church would be left with no option than to believe that government had abandoned them and therefore deserved no chance in future elections.

“The security agencies, especially the STF, who have failed in their responsibilities of protecting lives and property, have refused to allow our already traumatised members recover the corpses of their massacred relations for mass burial to shield the world from the realities of the sustained injustice in the state.

“They have in fact, from reliable sources sworn to withhold any medical, humanitarian or security intervention until they silently bury the dead members without any media coverage. “This to us is totally unacceptable; and it does prove that we have been strategically alienated in our own country by the very government we voted into power, with the hope of enjoying the best of welfare and security as guaranteed by the constitution.”

New Telegraph, however, gathered yesterday that a child to a Pastor of Baptist Church in the village was killed in the attack as well as the church also burnt down in the attack that lasted hours, it was learnt. To maintain peace in the area, OPSH commander yesterday said it has relocated the headquarters of the operation to Barkin Ladi Local Government.