

TODAY'S WEATHER **ABUJA** 23-30°C **MAIDUGURI** 28-37°C **ENUGU** 24-35°C **KANO** 25-37°C **LAGOS** 23-27°C **PORT HARCOURT** 22-28°C

Senator, Assemblyman Killed in Plateau Funeral

● *Death toll hits 104* ● *Curfew imposed on four LGAs*

Seriki Adinoyi in Jos

With no let-up in the violence, which started on Saturday in Plateau State, the Chairman, Senate Committee on Health, Senator Gyang Dantong, and a

member of the state House of Assembly representing Barkin Ladi Constituency, Hon. Gyang Fulani, were among scores of mourners killed yesterday in Matse village, Riyom Local Government Area by suspected

Fulani gunmen.

The two lawmakers were reportedly killed when the gunmen invaded the village as they were attending a mass burial for 63 victims of Saturday's attack in Karkuruk,

Barkin Ladi Local Government Area of the state.

Another lawmaker, Hon. Simon Davou Mwadkwon, a member of the House of Representatives representing Barkin Ladi/Riyom Federal

Constituency and Chairman of Barkin Ladi Local Government Area, Mr. Emmanuel Lomang, narrowly escaped death.

However, Mwadkwon is on the danger list at the Barkin Ladi General Hospital where

he was rushed with injuries sustained in the attack.

The incident, which saw the unconfirmed death toll rise from the attack and the reprisal to 104,

Continued on page 8

...FG, Mark, Tambuwal, Others Condemn Killing

● *Northern governors appeal for calm*

Kunle Akogun, Chuks Okocha and **Onwuka Nzeshi** in Abuja

Condemnations were swift yesterday as the Federal Government and colleagues of the two lawmakers from Plateau State killed at a funeral reacted to their deaths.

Senate President, Senator David Mark, described the assassination of Senator Gyang Dantong (PDP, Plateau North) as shocking, adding that "the incessant killings of innocent Nigerians must be stopped."

Besides Dantong, the Plateau State House of Assembly member representing Barkin Ladi Constituency, Hon. Gyang Fulani, was

also killed yesterday in Matse village, Riyom Local Government Area of Plateau State by suspected Fulani gunmen when they were at a funeral.

Another lawmaker, Hon. Simon Davou Mwadkwon, a member of the House of Representatives representing Ladi/Riyom Federal Constituency and Chairman of Barkin Ladi Local Government Area, Mr. Emmanuel Lomang, narrowly escaped death.

Mark, who flayed the attack on the mourners, said government at all levels and security operatives "must rise to halt these senseless killings."

"We must do everything within

Continued on page 8

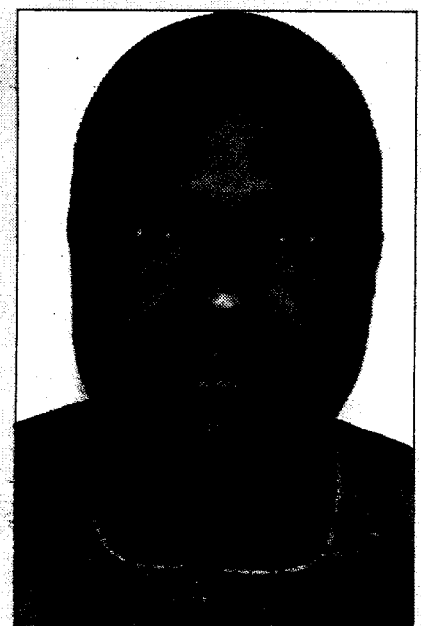
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Senator Gyang Dantong



Hon. James Gyang Fulani



Hon. Simon Davou Mwadkwon

...FG, MARK, TAMBUIWAL, OTHERS CONDEMN KILLING

the ambit of our laws to ensure that this type of murderous act is stopped. As a nation, we must just rise against those who are determined to return us to a state of nature where life had little or no value," he said.

Describing Dantong's death as "a personal loss," Mark said the deceased was a "patriotic parliamentarian, quintessential gentleman and committed nationalist who was killed in active service to his fatherland."

He called on the security agencies to bring the perpetrators of the gruesome deaths to justice.

House of Representatives Speaker, Hon Aminu Tambuwal, also condemned the killings of those he described as innocent mourners in the state, saying the incessant killings in Plateau and other parts of the country must be stopped forthwith.

Tambuwal, in a statement by his Special Adviser, Media and Public Affairs, Imam Imam, described one of the victims, Dantong, as a man of peace whose death was highly regrettable.

He urged the security agencies to rise to the challenge by

fishing out the perpetrators of the violence, while also urging the agencies to provide adequate protection to all Nigerians at all times.

While condoling with the government and the people of Plateau State, the speaker said the National Assembly would continue to liaise with other arms of government and security agencies to find a lasting solution to the spate of violence bedevilling the nation.

According to him, criminal groups hide under different guises to cause mayhem in the country, as such, Nigerians should remain resolute in their quest for a lasting peace.

The Federal Government also described Dantong's murder as shocking and regrettable, given his enormous contributions to the health sector.

Minister of Health, Prof. Onyebuchi Chukwu, in a statement yesterday, said the senator's death came at a time the ministry was looking forward to working with all stakeholders to reshape the health sector.

"We are shocked at the news of the sudden demise of the

Chairman of the Senate Committee on Health, Sen. Dantong, who through his committee has contributed greatly towards uplifting the sector.

"The late senator had great plans to advance the Nigerian health sector under the National Strategic Health Development Plan and was a passionate member of the Presidential Taskforce on Polio Eradication," the minister said.

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), which expressed shock at the renewed violence in the state, described as heinous and reprehensible the killing of Dantong and the majority leader of the Plateau State House of Assembly, Fulani.

A statement by the National Publicity Secretary of the party, Chief Olisa Metuh, said the PDP regrets the development, which it said was coming against the backdrop of fresh efforts by the Federal Government to tackle the nation's security challenges.

"This is a serious setback to the fresh efforts by the Federal Government to ensure unity and peaceful co-existence. The PDP is awfully shocked but we are

certain the people of Nigeria shall overcome. The PDP-led Federal Government will not be deterred," the party said.

"Our hearts goes to the government and the people of Plateau State on this very sad development. We mourn with the Nigerian Senate and the House of Representatives as well as the Plateau State House of Assembly on this unfortunate development.

"We finally urge the people to remain calm and avoid taking the law into their hands," the party added.

The member representing Jos South/Jos East Federal Constituency, Hon. Bitrus Kaze, also described the attack as a terrible and devastating incident.

Kaze, who narrowly escaped the incident, said the last he heard was that Mwadkwon was wounded and was recuperating at an undisclosed hospital.

"They were attacked while they were going for the mass burial of the victims of the attack in some villages. The last I heard of him (Mwadkwon) was that he was in hospital recuperating.

"I would have been with them but for the fact that it was not my immediate constituency that was attacked. I was to go with them but I had to excuse myself to avoid some people reading other meanings to my presence there," he said.

Chairman, House Committee on Human Rights, Hon. Beni Lar, described the incident as terrible and sad.

Lar, who had just returned from a conference of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland, said such incidents were part of the agenda of the conference.

Joining the fray, the Northern States Governors' Forum (NSGF) yesterday appealed to the people of Plateau State to exercise maximum restraint following killing of Dantong, Fulani and several others in the latest attacks on villages in Barkin Ladi and Riyom Local Governments of

the state.

Chairman of the forum and Governor of Niger State, Dr. Mu'azu Babangida Aliyu, said the forum was pained by the barbaric act, especially as it came at a time that the Federal Government is overhauling the nation's security architecture to enable it to contain the excesses of various armed groups terrorising the nation.

A statement by Aliyu's Chief Press Secretary, Danladi Ndayebo, urged families of the victims not to retaliate, emphasising that vengeance belongs to God.

The forum urged security agencies to close ranks so as to end the senseless killing of innocent Nigerians.

It prayed God to grant those who lost their lives in the attacks, eternal rest and their families, the fortitude to bear the irreparable loss.

PROFILE OF THE LEGISLATORS

Senator Gyang