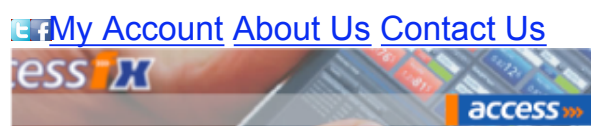


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Plateau: 5,500 Displaced in Barkin Ladi, Riyom Councils, Says Red Cross

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Governor Jonah Jang

Seriki Adinoyi and Mohammed Aminu

The International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) and Nigeria Red Cross (NRC) yesterday disclosed that about 5,500 persons were displaced, while about 25 villages were affected during the recent attacks on villages in Barkin Ladi and Riyom Local Government Areas of Plateau State.

And to underscore the importance of unity amongst Nigerians, the Conference of Nigeria Political Parties (CNPP) Sokoto State Chapter, condemned the ejection of Fulani herdsmen by the Special Task Force (STF) from some villages in the two councils.

A joint statement issued by ICRC and NRC and signed by the Head of the ICRC's office in Jos, Julia Unger, said: "The armed violence and clashes that took place on the July 7 and 8 between the mainly livestock-herding Fulani and the farming Berom communities in Riyom and Barkin Ladi, near Jos (Plateau State) caused dozens of casualties and forced more than 5,500 people to flee their homes."

Unger said ICRC and NRC were currently providing essential assistance to the displaced people, who had to take shelter with host families, in schools, and community halls.

"This is the fourth of such intervention for victims of inter-community violence in Plateau State since the ICRC opened its new office in Jos in February, this year in collaboration with NRC. People left their homes and ran to safety with only the clothes they were wearing. They need everything to survive in this kind of situation.

"They have urgent needs in terms of food, water and basic household items. A curfew has been imposed in the affected areas to quell any further violence, and the security situation remains unpredictable," the statement explained.

While noting that: "So far, ICRC had delivered one month's food rations (including rice, beans and cooking oil) along with blankets, buckets, soap and other essential items to over 2,800 displaced people", Unger said: "It has also installed 10 temporary sanitary facilities in places where the displaced persons are hosted, and it is in the process of installing two hand pumps to improve their access to water."

Meanwhile, the CNPP which described the ejection of the herdsmen as inhuman and a violation of their human rights, stated that the Fulani herdsmen had been living in such settlements for over a century ago and wondered why government would embark on such obnoxious policy.

Speaking with THISDAY in Sokoto Wednesday, its Chairman, Alhaji Abba Sidi, faulted the policy, which he described as a ploy to eject the herdsmen from Plateau state.

He lamented that the Fulani herdsmen were relocated to a place that was not conducive for them without any relief material from the government.

He said the ejection of the herdsmen would worsen the security situation in the state, adding that the policy was ill-conceived and an indication of federal government's failure to tackle the security challenge in the country.

The CNPP chairman attributed the recurring violence and bloodshed in Plateau state to injustice and failure of the leadership in the state to be fair to all.

He also attributed the problem to Governor Jonah Jang's incompetence and failure to unite all ethnic groups in the state.

"As far as we are concerned, Jang is incompetent to run the affairs of Plateau State and had shown discrimination against other ethnic groups

that are not Beroms in the state.”

Thus, he should realise that power is transient and will account for his deeds before God in the hereafter,” Sidi stressed.

The CNPP chairman appealed to Fulani herdsmen in Plateau state to be patient and law abiding and should not take law into their hands.

He also called on the leadership in the state to strive to unite all warring groups for peace to reign.

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