

Youths Protest as Gunmen Kill Two in Jos

Seriki Adinoyi in Jos

Residents of Trade Centre in Kuru village of Jos South local government council of Plateau State yesterday went on rampage, following the killing of two persons by unknown gunmen.

Special Adviser to Governor Jonah Jang on Media and Publicity, Hon. Pam Ayuba, who narrowly escaped being lynched by the youths, said one of the deceased was a physically challenged person, who was limping on one leg, while the other man, who was trying to assist him to move fast was also shot in the hand and later died in the hospital.

Ayuba said it was at about 7 p.m. on December 30, when the people were relaxing outside their houses that five people dressed in black in a Hilux van opened fire on them.

He said: "A man, who was limping and who is a member of staff of the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS), Kuru could not run when others fled during the stampede. Another man who wanted to support him to walk fast was shot in the arm and was rushed to Vom Christian Hospital for medical attention.

"At first, when the people saw

the attackers alighting from the Hilux van, five of them dressed in black, they raised an alarm and immediately the assailants opened fire on them."

Ayuba said he was later told yesterday that the youths were protesting because they wanted the state government to "feel the pains they are going through."

The Special Adviser, who also hails from Jos South, added that he was nearly lynched.

The rampaging youths were said to have attempted blowing up the linking bridge.

But Ayuba who responded on behalf of government, condemned the youths acts, warning that they were not expected to take the laws into their hands.

The Spokesman of the Special Task Force (STF), Captain Salisu Ibrahim Mustapha, who confirmed the killing, said: "At Kuru area close to NIPSS last night (Sunday night), some unidentified gunmen came to the community and shot at people indiscriminately where one Dung Mann died instantly while wounding another. But this morning (yesterday morning) the youths came in their numbers to barricade the roads and repelling people from coming in and going out."

Mustapha said the senior

STF officers had to plead with the protesting youths before dispersing on their own volition.

The military helicopters also intensified their surveillance yesterday by hovering in the air over the troubled spot, Jos and its environs.

Meanwhile, the state Commissioner of Police, Mr. Chris Olakpe, held a stakeholders' meeting with religious leaders, communities, youths, and other leaders cautioning them against violence during the New Year celebration.

Olakpe, who called out all the representatives of the youth leaders, told them that the power of violence and peace lied in their hands as they are still vibrant, dynamic and exuberant.

He said he called them out because if they found peace within them there will be peace in the entire state, which the youth leaders affirmed.

According to him, "I am calling you also because you are the vanguard for the movement for or against peace on the Plateau. But today, you are going to be vanguard for peace. This is because the leaders here seated whom I have invited to come and watch brief cannot come out to fire anybody because they have lost strength. So, it is the youths



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that have the strength to either carry weapons or cudgels to fight or destroy.

"You are the pillars of the state. You are the leaders of tomorrow. At the same time, you are the ones that can be used to foment trouble or otherwise. That is why I call you today to say 'No to violence', and that all of you who are gathered here have become part and parcel of the peace process in the state."

In his remarks, Commander of the STF, Major-General Henry Ayoola, who came from the scene of the crisis in Kuru, said: "the meeting was divinely ordained that yesterday being the last day of December 2012, was a unique opportunity to say 'bye bye to an era that we all love to put behind us, an era of blood-letting, an era of violence, an era of hate and all kinds of evil."