

# Ten Killed, Five Injured as Gunmen Attack Plateau Villages

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- **Bandits invade Kogi community, kill six, burn 50 houses**

Seriki Adinoyi in Jos and Yekini Jimoh in Lokoja

Ten persons have been confirmed dead while five others were injured in two fresh attacks carried out by gunmen in Barki Ladi Local Government Area (LGA) of Plateau State.

This is coming as armed bandits reportedly killed six persons and also razed down over 50 houses in Sheria, Landu, Ankura and Oguma under Bassa LGA of Kogi State.

The attacks on Plateau villages came less than one week after the Special Task Force (STF) returned over 200 persons from one of the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps in Jos to their villages which they deserted earlier as a result of frequent attacks on their communities.

THISDAY gathered that five of the victims were killed last Wednesday night as they were celebrating the Christmas at Rawuru community, while five others died after the gunmen attacked them in a hotel located at Gwol the previous day.

Spokesman of the state Police Command, Mr. Mathias Terna, who claimed that only five died in the attacks, said he was attending a security meeting when contacted over the development.

But a community leader in the LGA, Mr. Francis Chong, confirmed the fresh attack to THISDAY last night.

"I can confirm to you that the attacks actually took place. What happened was that last Wednesday, seven people were moving about in Rawuru community after celebrating the Christmas party organised in the locality when they suddenly came under attack by the gunmen. Five of them died as a result of gunshot wounds while two others are still in the hospital

"Before the attack in Rawuru, five other villagers were shot and killed the previous day while they were also celebrating the season in a hotel in Gwol community. From the look of things, this is a clear case of resumption of terror attacks on the people, and we are calling on the security agents to rise up to the occasion and stop the fresh onslaught against our people," he said.

In a related development, an armed militia has reportedly killed six persons and razed down over 50 houses in Sheria, Landu, Ankura and Oguma under Bassa Local Government Area (LGA) of Kogi State.

The Vice Chairman, Mozum Concern Youth Advocacy, Mallam Hamzat Mohammed, who confirmed the attack on Kogi community in a statement made available to journalists in Lokoja yesterday, said the attack was accompanied by sporadic shootings, which sent many scampering for safety on Christmas day.

Hamzat, who allegedly accused Bassa – Komo militia of carrying out the attack, noted that the widespread burning and destruction were effectively carried out in Oguma in spite of government's effort in bringing peace between the Egbura and Bassa Komo in the LGA.

He decried the action of the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) in the area who according to him, gave unconvincing excuses when the remaining houses in Biroko were burnt and destroyed for four days.

“The Divisional Police Officer who could not carry out any arrest claimed that only a few houses were burnt whereas over 50 houses belonging to Egburas were burnt down by the Bassa-Komo militias.

“Before now, the same DPO gave unconvincing excuses when the remaining houses in Biroko were burnt and destroyed for good four successive days. We are therefore worried that, this act could be accomplished unrestricted and in full glare of the DPO who is the chief security officer of the area and Aguma of Bassa-Komo who doubles as the chairman of Bassa traditional council without any arrest,” he said.

The chairman while commending Governor Yahaya Bello for the efforts made so far particularly the setting up of the judiciary commission of enquiry on the crisis, called for a full implementation of the report, adding that, the government should urgently come to their rescue and resettle the affected people in the community.

In a swift reaction, the chairman Bassa Cultural Development Union (BCDU) Samuel Nyizona, while debunking the allegations, said several houses were burnt by suspected militia allegedly loyal to the Egbura’s in a village called Kebe in Kwomo district which led to the death of six people.

“As I speak to you, six people have been confirmed dead. This attack was carried out by the Egbura’s. We were surprised when some group in a military uniform stormed Bassa-Komo community to attack our people. They are not military men but dressed in military uniform. Many are still missing as I speak to you. The allegation that houses were burnt by Bassa-Komo could be a reprisal attack,” Nyizoma added.

According to him, two persons are currently receiving treatment in the hospital.

Meanwhile, the special adviser to Governor Yahaya Bello on good governance and due process, Ademur Ibrahim, while confirming the attack in Egbura community, said the perpetrators of the act will be brought to book.