

# 18 killed in Plateau midnight attack

BY TAYE OBATERU, *with agency reports*

**JOS**—EIGHTEEN lives were again lost in another attack on a village in Barakin Ladi Local Government Area of Plateau State in the early hours of yesterday by marauders who stole 19 cows.

Among those killed were a driver, his wife and their four children. One of the attackers was also killed as youths of the village mobilised to ward off the attackers who set one house ablaze and injured about seven other people.

The attackers, armed with sophisticated guns, machetes and other dangerous weapons, were said to have invaded Belle village in Fan District of the local govern-

ment from the nearby hills at about 1.00am and had a field day until some youth rose up to face them.

The Special Task Force, STF, Spokesman, Capt. Charles Ekeocha, who confirmed the incident, blamed the villagers for not contacting the force on time.

He said: "The attack was carried out around midnight, but the villagers did not inform us until the attackers had fled. A military helicopter has been deployed there for aerial surveillance because some cattle were also rustled during the attack."

Ekeocha said more troops had been deployed to beef up security in the area, and that men of the force were on the trail of the assailants, noting that

relevant information about the victims would be released later. He promised that the military was on top of the situation.

Chairman of the Local Government, Dr. Fom Dakwak, who briefed journalists yesterday, said 14 people were killed on the spot while four others died on their way to the hospital.

He said the timely response of the youths saved the situation from getting worse as they succeeded in repelling the attackers, adding that they killed one of the attackers who was known to the villagers and had given a clue to where the attackers came from.

Confirming the development, the state Police Command in a statement signed by its spokesman, ASP Apev

Jacob, said security men moved to the village on learning of the development but was yet to make any arrest.

The Command appealed for calm as efforts were on to track down the attackers and solicited for useful information that could assist them.

He said the injured were rushed to the Jos University Teaching Hospital, JUTH.

The attack drew sympathisers from neighbouring communities, many of whom openly lamented the continued attacks and killings of innocent people.

Meanwhile, men of the joint Special Task Force, STF, in-charge of the security in the troubled Plateau, have arrested 60 youths suspected to be miscreants in some "hostile communities" in Jos. The development followed a night raid, which STF spokesman Capt. Charles Ekeocha, said would "soon become a more regular exercise toward freeing the capital city of hoodlums".

## ... Sambo describes Plateau, Borno crises as threat to democracy

BY TAYE OBATERU

**JOS**—THE security challenges in Plateau

and Borno states have been described as threat to the country's democracy which must be nipped in

the bud.

Vice President Mohammed Namadi Sambo, stated this in a message to the