

## 12 killed in Jos again

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**I**T was another day of wailing and mourning in Plateau State yesterday as 12 people were again killed in separate attacks on two villages in Barkin Ladi Local Government Area.

Nine people, including a man, his wife and seven children were killed at Kakpwis Foron while three people were killed at Kunzin by heavily armed gunmen said to have numbered up to 30 and who attacked the villages almost simultaneously.

The vigilante groups in the two villages, according to eyewitnesses, overwhelmed by the superior fire power of the assailants who stormed the villages at about midnight, shot at their victims and used knives to cut them to ensure that none of them survived.

The gunmen suspected to be Fulani, all dressed in black, were also said to have destroyed farmlands be-

longing to the villagers as they took their exit.

An eyewitness who is a member of the neighborhood watch, Bitrus Manchang, told journalists that they noticed the arrival of the assailants at about 12 midnight and promptly notified other villagers but they were over powered by the sophisticated weapons of the attackers.

Meanwhile, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has called for an end to ethnic and religious violence in Nigeria's "Middle Belt," particularly in and around the city of Jos. U.N. officials want national and local authorities to address the underlying causes of the deadly attacks.

In a statement released Friday, U.N. Human Rights Chief, Navi Pillay called for a concerted effort to deal with the underlying causes of such repeated violent outbreaks. Her spokesman, Rupert Colville, says Nigerian authorities should take immediate steps to prevent further violence.

"We encourage the author-

ities at national and local level to take effective preventive measures against such violence, including by curbing hate-speech and working with civil society, including human rights NGOs [non-governmental organization], religious leaders and academic institutions, to attempt to bring about reconciliation between the various communities. It is of utmost importance that justice is done and is seen to be done by prosecuting the alleged perpetrators of violence, whoever they may be and ensuring remedies for victims and their families," Colville said. Colville says the security forces also must act within the law, and they must be even-handed in their treatment when responding to outbreaks of violence in the country.

He says the security forces sometimes make the situation worse by appearing to take one side or the other. And, he notes they sometimes react with excessive force, which makes the situation worse.