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40 killed in separate attacks in Plateau, Kaduna

on January 07, 2014 / in [News](#) 12:00 am / [Comments](#)

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Jos—There was bloodshed in Plateau and Kaduna states, yesterday, leading to the death of no fewer than 40 people, including policemen, women and children.

At least 30 people, mostly women and children, were killed when suspected Fulani herdsmen attacked Shonong village in Riyom Local Government Area of Plateau State.

The assailants who stormed the village at about 7.am, according to eyewitnesses, left 25 people injured and razed over 40 houses.

Most of those killed were children who, frightened by the sound of sporadic gunshots, ran out of their homes but were gunned down by the attackers who had positioned themselves around the community.

Also, 10 other persons were killed including four policemen in Kaduna. The policemen attached to a commercial bank in Rigasa area of the metropolis were reportedly ambushed and killed by unknown persons while they were going home after closing from work along the Nnamdi Azikiwe by-pass just as the discovery of two fresh corpses in Mifi, on the Atakad Hills in Kaura Local Government Area of the state sparked another round of skirmishes leading to the death of four other persons said to be Fulani.

The two incidents happened on the heels of last week's violence that left the Emir of Jere, Jere Local Government Area, Alhaji Sa'ad Usman critically injured, and four others feared dead.

However, in Jos, a survivor currently on admission at the Vom Christian Hospital, Toma Shom told newsmen that he got shot at the back of his house where he was moulding blocks.

He said the attackers came early in the morning when many of the villagers had gone to their farms leaving behind mostly women, children and the aged who were the major casualties.

Another villager who confirmed that about 30 corpses had been recovered so far explained that the number of death

could be more as some of those shot escaped into the bush. He said a search of the surrounding bushes was on to see if there were more corpses.

The Majority Leader of the Plateau State House of Assembly who represents the local government area, Mr. Daniel Dem, described the killings as unfortunate coming some days after the burial of the acting traditional chief of the village who was killed with two others sometime back.

According to him, "I was called at about 8 am that there was a fight in Shonong and that some women and children who went to look for fire wood in the farm were shot dead; that the Fulani surrounded the entire community firing sporadic gunshots and several people were killed and many injured.

"We have security men there and if the attack which started from 8. am till afternoon, I think something must be wrong. What are the military there for? If we will have attack from morning to afternoon and people killed, houses burnt, I think the military should be asked why they were there to protect lives and property of the people.

"We have tried to get in touch with them and they said they are on ground, but what then happened that over 30 people were killed with so many casualties lying in the hospital?", he wondered.

There has been an upsurge in attacks on villages by suspected herdsmen in the past few weeks resulting in loss of lives and property. Last week, about three communities were attacked in Bokkos Local Government Area in Plateau State.

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