

## Death toll now 135 as Buhari visits Plateau

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**Jos** – The death toll in last weekend's attacks on some villages in three local government areas of Plateau State by herdsmen has hit 135, as President Muhammadu Buhari visited the troubled state yesterday.



President Buhari with Plateau State Governor Simon Lalung, Kebbi State Governor Atiku Bagudu, Niger State Governor Abubakar Sani Bello, Minister of Interior Abdulrahman Dambazzau and Minister of Defence Monsur Dan Ali during the Sympathy visit to Jos Plateau State on 26th June 2018

**Vanguard** reported on Monday that no fewer than 120 persons, comprising 34 in Nekan, 39 in Kufang and 47 in Ruku villages, were killed in the coordinated attacks, though the Police confirmed 86 casualties.

However, the attacks which continued on Monday, despite the dawn-to-dusk curfew imposed on the three local government areas by the Plateau State Government, claimed 15 persons more as at yesterday in Dorowa Babuje village in Barkin Ladi Local Government Area.

The new toll came as the Vice President, Professor Yemi Osinbajo, who was on an on-the-spot visit to Plateau State on Monday, warned against religious war in the country, even as the the Inspector-General of Police, Ibrahim Idris, yesterday removed the state Police Commissioner, Undie Adie, who was redeployed to Force Headquarters in Abuja.

On the fresh attacks on Dorowa Babuje village in Bakin Ladi Local Government Area, Monday, residents said the 15 victims were killed as their houses were also razed by the attackers.

A resident, Friday Dusu, said: "We are in hiding now because it seems the security forces are targeting us. Assemblies of God Church, First Baptist Church, Tsauke Baptist Church, Living Faith Church and COCIN LCC Ratatis, have all been razed down in Dorowa Babuje."

Residents in the affected communities in Barkin Ladi also complained that men of Operation Safe Haven forced people in the attacked communities to secretly bury their dead.

But spokesman of Operation Safe Haven, Major Adam Umar, denied the villagers' claims, saying "nobody forced anybody to bury the dead. The dead had to be buried and that was exactly what they did.

"The issue is that when a person is dead, definitely, it is our tradition that the person must be buried. They buried them. If you have a dead body, must somebody force you to bury the dead person?

Asked about the ploy to destroy evidence which would support the number of casualties claimed, he added: "What evidence? If you look at it, there are numbers that were being given, yes, people give numbers, we are security operatives and we give out the numbers when we are sure that this is the exact number because this thing happened.

"Some were killed in their rooms, some were killed in their compounds, and some were even killed in their farms.

"So nobody forced anybody to bury, they had to bury because if you leave dead bodies, they could even affect the people that are alive."