

Gunmen kill nine people in Plateau attack

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Gunmen on Wednesday killed nine civilians in an attack on a village in Plateau, said police, in what one politician describe as the latest outburst of intercommunal violence.

A police spokesman for Plateau state said the unidentified assailants shot dead residents and burnt 22 houses in the assault on the village of Hura.

The bloodshed followed a rise in tensions between the local Irigwe community and Fulani herders over alleged cattle rustling and land disputes.

Regional lawmaker Haruna Maitala denounced the “worrying reoccurrences of attacks and counter-attacks.

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“The attacks go on unabated, with a clear extension of unwarranted hatred amongst members of the two communities,” he said in a statement.

Central Plateau state is part of Nigeria's so-called middle-belt that divides the mainly Muslim north from the predominantly Christian south.

Deadly clashes between nomadic Fulani herders and farmers over land, grazing, and water have plagued the area for years.

Aid group Mercy Corps said in May last year that violence between farmers and pastoralists in Nigeria had "contributed to more than 7,000 deaths in the past five years".

Attacks in remote areas often go unreported, but the authorities in Plateau state insist that the bloodshed has decreased following reconciliation efforts between the communities.