



MINISTERS AT ASO ROCK—From left, Minister of Youth and Sports Development, Mr Sunday Dare; Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Zainab Ahmed and Minister of Information and Culture, Lai Mohammed, at the Presidential Villa in Abuja, yesterday.

Mayhem in Gombe as Boko Haram wreaks havoc in Borno

●Houses burnt, govt slams 24-hr curfew on 3 communities ●Many feared dead as Boko Haram attacks Damasak in Borno ●Houses, police station, market, shops, schools burnt down

By Ndahi Marama & Ben Ngwakwe

GOMBE—No fewer than 15 persons were on Tuesday night, killed in the Waja/Lugunja communal clash that affected three communities of Gombe State.

The killings in the affected communities of Nyuwar, Jessu and Yolde in Balanga Local Government Area compelled the state government to declare a 24-hour curfew yesterday.

This came as Boko Haram insurgents, for the second time in one week,

also on Tuesday, attacked Damasak in Mobbar Local Government Area of Borno State, killing many persons whose number is yet to be ascertained by security agencies.

The insurgents also razed houses, schools, markets, shops, police stations and whatever was left of the United Nations' humanitarian hub in the area.

Vanguard learned that while eight persons were killed at Nyuwar, seven others had life snuffed out of them at Jessu.

Several other persons

were also said to have been injured in the clash.

The level of destruction of the communities forced the governor, Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya, to embark on on-the-spot assessment of the troubled communities yesterday.

'Attackers came at night'

At Nyuwar, representative of the district head, Mr. Yohanna Istifanus, narrated to the governor how his community was stormed by attackers in

the late hours of the night.

He said: "We were asleep with our families in our homes, only for the militia, armed with dangerous weapons to attack our houses and set our food storage facilities ablaze. They asked us to vacate the land, else they will wipe out the entire Lunguda tribal communities."

"The attack claimed the lives of eight of our people as we were caught off guard and the attackers threatened to return tonight (last night).

"We hope the presence of the governor and the prompt deployment of security men will prevent this from happening, and we pray the law will take its course for the perpetrators to be punished."

At Jessu, a community leader, Mr. Jason Jase, who conducted the governor round the community, said they lost seven persons, while several houses and food storage facilities were burnt.

Disturbed by the scale of destruction in the communities, Governor Yahaya vowed to bring the perpetrators of the violence to book, even as he cautioned against reprisal attacks.

The governor, who led heads of security agencies and top functionaries of his administration on a visit to the communities, expressed total displeasure over the crisis.

Addressing the people of the communities, after interacting with the community leaders and youths, said his administration would not fold its arms and allow such callous act to be unleashed on innocent people.

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He said: "As you can see, I have led all heads of security agencies in Gombe State to your communities just to show you how committed the government is in ensuring that this crisis is brought to an end."

"I want to inform you that one of the measures we have taken was to impose a curfew to check movement of everyone and we have deployed security personnel to protect you and your property until normalcy is restored."

"Let me extend my heartfelt condolences to you over the loss of precious lives and property as a result of this senseless act. Our thoughts and prayers are with you and as a responsible government, we are conscious of our responsibilities of safeguarding the lives and property of our people."

He told residents of the affected communities that security personnel from the Nigerian Police, Army, Civil Defence Corps and DSS would work closely with them to identify all the actors

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