

# Plateau: Family of 14 killed in fresh attack

By RAYMOND GUKAS

**B**ARELY 24 hours after a family of nine and three others were killed in Barkin Ladi Local Government area of Plateau State, a fresh bloody attack claimed at least a family of 14 people including a pregnant mother, in Vwang Kogot village, Vwang district of Jos South Local Government area of the state.

The incident occurred Friday at about 11pm, when suspected Fulani herdsmen stormed the village.

This, our Correspondent gathered, was the third time the village which is located in a valley surrounded by rocky hills, was being attacked with no fewer than 19 lives now lost in these attacks and properties razed in the process.

The village, about three kilometres off the major road leading to Manchok town in Kaduna State, witnessed a large number of sympathizers who throng the area in their hundreds crying and wailing, especially with the gory sights of the victims made up of women and kids.

This brings to about eight of such attacks within Barkin Ladi, Jos North, Riyom and Jos South local government areas in Plateau North senatorial district, with no fewer than 90 lives lost in the attacks which are purported to have been carried out with the support of members of the Special Task Force (STF) drafted to the state to maintain law and order.

According to eye witnesses accounts, their attackers came about 11pm and went to the family home of Dauda Badung and killed him and his pregnant wife with five children and two grand children. Badung, an elder brother to Gyang, also lost six children in the attack.

Also, a 70-year-old man, a 60-year-old woman and a two year old Helen Gyang, were not spared as they were among those killed with a four-year-old survivor with gunshot wounds and is now

receiving treatment at the Vom Christian Hospital.

Initially, the three survivors were rushed to the hospital but one of them lost his life and the other transferred to the Jos University Teaching Hospital (JUTH) because of the deep cuts he received on his head by the assailants who are said to have been escorted by men in military uniform.

Commenting on the development, the Special Adviser to the state governor on Media, Hon. Pam Ayuba, regretted the attack and assured that the perpetrators will be fished out and brought to book.

Ayuba, who said this attack which came barely few hours after the State Security Council

meeting was held, stated that the government was satisfied with new security measures being adopted, saying these measures would bring hope to the situation and warned those behind these to repent or else face the music.

Mass burial was carried out for the 14 victims in the village at about 2pm.

Meanwhile, the Special Task Force (STF) on Jos crises code named 'Operation Safe Haven' has arrested one Muhammed Abdulahi, last night in Rop village of Barkin Ladi local government when the soldiers aborted another attack on the village.

Spokesman of the STF, Captain Charles Ekeocha, while parading the suspect

at the STF Headquarters, Jos yesterday said: "This young man with name Muhammed Abdulahi, was among the over 30 attackers who came to attack Rop village of Barkin Ladi last night".

"The youths of the area alerted us of the impending attack and we moved in to the village. The attackers learnt of our presence and aborted their plan. Unfortunately for this man, we met him on the road and we suspected him as one of them.

"We conduct immediate search on him and found in his travelling bag some weapons of attack. The weapons in his travelling bag include a pistol, knife and handset.

"We are prepared to work

if the youths are ready to cooperate with us by giving intelligence information. We are not spirit; we are also human; we cannot succeed without people's cooperation. We were able to arrest this man because the youths are ready to work with us.

"We work where we accepted to work, where the youths said they don't want us, we vacate the area. Any day they are ready to accept us and they ask us to come back, we will come back. There is no benefit for soldier killing those we are brought to protect; people should stop this rumour that we aid some of the attacks. This will not help us or the peace process", Ekeocha said.

## 'Illegal use of Forest Reserve causes desertification'

By IBRAHIM HABU, Gusau

**I**NDISCRIMINATE and illegal reservation of gazette forest land to expand agricultural production as a result of increase in human population has been described as the major cause of desertification.

This was disclosed by the Zamfara State Director Forestry of the Ministry of Environment and Solid Minerals Development, Alhaji Isa Ibrahim Ahmad Bungudu, while speaking with *Sunday Champion* in his office, Gusau.

According to Ibrahim, most of the people were involved in deforestation of the gazetted land, because of ignorance about the importance of environmental conservation, sustainable forest management, utilization and dangers associated with Sahara desert encroachment.

Ibrahim said massive destruction of vegetation started since the year 2000, adding that over 60 per cent of the State forest are being deserved.

He said the international standard for vegetation cover is 25 per cent of the total land area for each state, adding: "Our vegetation is presently about 10 per cent, far lagging behind the international standard".

To curb deforestation in the state, he said several plans are put in place, going by the budget proposal, which included production of about 1,000 free seedlings for distribution to general public for planting in their farming lands (Agro Forestry).



**VISIT (R-L)** Mr. Dele Togunde, Registrar/CEO, Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators of Nigeria (ICSAN); Robert Ing (ICSAN UK Finance Director); Mr. Hakeem Ogunniran (past president, ICSAN); Fiona Hellowell (ICSAN Head of Education); Tunde Busari (President/Chairman of Council, ICSAN); Nigel Tompkins (ICSAN Chief Operating Officer); Dr. Nosike Agokei (Past President, ICSAN); and Theresa Minnie (ICSAN Head, Membership and Students), during the visit of ICSAN delegation to its parent body, ICSA UK, in London recently. With them (l-r back row) are Russel Morice (ICSAN Clerk to Council) and Stephen Clues (ICSAN Director of Sales & Marketing).

## Bendel Insurance staff accuse MD of \$45,000 fraud

By EBOJELE AKHERE