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## **NIGERIA | Attack Claims Over 30 Lives**

A Fulani herder militia attack in Plateau State on Oct. 15 claimed the lives of over 30 victims, the majority of whom were women and children. Witnesses have accused the Nigerian Army of disarming and then abandoning the victims ahead of the attack.

Prior to the attack on Nkyie Doghwro village in the Irigwe Chiefdom of Bassa Local Government Area (LGA) in Plateau State, soldiers from the 3rd Armored Division of the Nigeria Army, whose barracks are a 10-minute drive from the village, arrested anyone in the village found with weapons and confiscated anything that could be used in self-defense.

There were indications that an attack was imminent, and soldiers reportedly told villagers to spend the night in a classroom in the local primary school, saying that they would protect them. According to survivors, the soldiers withdrew, and militia men, allegedly dressed in military fatigues, shot and then used machetes to mutilate 27 of the villagers who were sheltering in the classroom.

Mervyn Thomas, Chief Executive of Christian Solidarity Worldwide-UK (CSW-UK) said, “It is deeply disturbing that 27 vulnerable villagers who gathered in a classroom, having been assured of military protection, were brutally murdered by perpetrators who remain at large. The fact that an army barracks is situated a mere ten minutes away from the site of the murders raises difficult questions as to why the military was not able to be of greater assistance to the unarmed civilians they had vowed to protect. We urge the Nigerian government to investigate the circumstances surrounding these killings, and to take action against any members of the military who are found to be guilty of either a dereliction of duty or complicity in the killings.” The attack on Nkyie Doghwro is part of a campaign of sustained assaults by herder militia on the Irigwe Chiefdom that has claimed over 50 lives in a little over a month. According to the Irigwe Development Association: “these attacks have continue in sequence and unstoppable while no single attacker has been arrested by the security agents, who will rather arrest and detain helpless [locals] on suspicion of possessing any form of weapon for self-defense.”

On Sept. 7, the 16th anniversary of the 2001 Jos Crisis when over 2,000 people died in orchestrated religious violence, 19 members of the same family were killed, most of whom were women and children, when herder militia attacked Ncha village. Several people were injured and at least 10 homes were torched. On Sept. 9, a villager and a soldier were killed in an attack on Hukke village.

On Oct. 8, one person was killed and another wounded when Nkie Dongwro village was targeted. On Oct. 10, a young man named Solomon Elisha was shot and killed, allegedly by a mobile policeman, in Kpachudu. Three people died and homes were burned down when Nzhweruvo and Tafigana villages were attacked Oct. 11. More homes were destroyed during an attack on Rikwe Chongu on Oct. 12.

On Oct. 13, Governor Simon Lalong of Plateau State declared a dusk-to-dawn curfew in Bassa LGA. However, on Oct. 14, six people died, including an infant, five were injured and around 10 houses were torched during an attack on Taegbe village. On the same day, the militia attempted to attack Nzhweruvo village once more but failed. As violence continues, and following the massacre in Nkyie Doghwro, every boarding school in the area has been closed to ensure the safety of students.

Bassa LGA is contiguous with southern Kaduna, where for over a year Fulani herder militia have attacked communities, killing over 800 people and seizing land and property with relative impunity. The surge of attacks in Bassa LGA may indicate that the most intense violence has once again shifted to Plateau State.

Rev Yunusa Nmadu, CEO of CSW-Nigeria, said, "By 2015, the Fulani herder militia had already been designated the world's fourth most deadly terrorist group. Since then, it has continued to murder with impunity, as is evident from the remorselessly rising death toll in villages in north-central Nigeria. The current killing and forced displacement of the Irigwe people has continued for seven days, yet the authorities continue to insist the killers are criminals or mad men. If this were accurate, then criminality and madness would need to be redefined as the meticulously organized and executed massacres of indigenous populations in order to alter the demography of an area. We urge the federal government to call these terrorists what they really are and to deal with them accordingly and urgently."