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NIGERIA | 11 Killed in Central States

Attacks by armed men of Fulani ethnicity in Nigeria's Kaduna, Plateau and Benue states between Sept. 20-26 claimed the lives of 11 people, including a community leader and a traditional ruler.

On Sept. 26, gunmen invaded the Dogon Fili Community in the Godogodo Chiefdom of Jema'a Local Government Area (LGA), southern Kaduna late in the evening, killing community leader Yunana Abu and another villager identified as Christopher Ango. It was the latest attack to occur in the wake of a series of high-profile peace initiatives in the area, including the inauguration of "The House of Kaduna Family," by the Kaduna State Governor Nasir el Rufai.

On Sept. 24, five people died when around 20 gunmen attacked the K/Vom Community in the Vwang District of Jos South LGA in Plateau State. Four people were killed while relaxing in a bar and a student from the School of Animal Health Production Vom was murdered close to his shop.

On Sept. 21, traditional ruler Bulus Chuwang Jang, the Acting Gwom Rwei of Foron District in Barkin Ladi LGA, Plateau State, who was a strong advocate for peace and reconciliation, was murdered by men wielding AK-47s after they broke into his home.

Earlier, reports emerged of an attack on Tse-Apera village in Nzorov in Guma LGA, the home area of Benue State Governor Samuel Ortom, that claimed the lives of three people. Armed men reportedly surrounded the area at around 5 a.m. on Sept. 20 and attacked from house-to-house, injuring eight people and killing two, one of whom was reportedly beheaded. Some of the injured were later transported to the Guma General Hospital, while others were taken to the Benue State University Teaching Hospital (BSUTH), where the third victim died. The Chairman of the LGA, Hon. Caleb Aba informed Nigerian media that the assailants were identified as being members of the Fulani ethnic group "by their robes and the language they speak."

In a media interview published on Sept. 27 in which he discussed the current insecurity in both central and north western Nigeria among other issues, Jonah Jang, a former Plateau State Governor, alleged there were “highly placed people in Nigeria who are behind the security crisis in the country,” and that “land areas belonging to indigenous people are being taken over by other people and occupied by force and the government is not saying anything about it.” He added, “What is happening is not a secret; people are being brought from Mali, Chad and all over to come and occupy native land. Is it somebody’s agenda to create a territory for some people in Nigeria?”

CSW’s Founder President Mervyn Thomas said, “We extend our deepest condolences to all who have lost loved ones in the recent violence and wish those who were injured a swift and full recovery. These latest attacks once again highlight the unacceptable levels of insecurity in central Nigeria, and underline the fact that far more can and must be done by the Nigerian authorities to apprehend the perpetrators, secure the lives and properties of civilians, and ensure lasting peace with justice. We continue to call on UN Member States to raise the ongoing crisis in Nigeria’s Middle Belt states during the current session of the UN Human Rights Council, and in all future negotiations and discussions with the Nigerian government.”