



## NEWS SITUATION TRACKING – NIGERIA



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### ARMED ATTACK BY SUSPECTED ETHNIC MILITIA IN BOKKOS, BARKIN LADI AND MANGU LGAs OF PLATEAU STATE, NORTH-CENTRAL REGION OF NIGERIA.

#### Vol. 4

**Location:** NIGERIA

**Issue:** 199 people killed, 302 people injured and over 10,000 others internally displaced in coordinated attacks carried out by suspected ethnic militias between December 21 and 31, 2023<sup>2</sup>.

**Date:** December 27, 2023

#### COMMUNITY PROFILING

#### CRITICAL STAKEHOLDERS

#### INCIDENT PROFILING

**Population:** As of December 2023, Nigeria's population is estimated at 226.2 million<sup>3</sup>.

#### Basic Demography and Geography of Hotspots:

Nigeria shares land borders with the Republic of Benin, Chad, Cameroun, Niger and the Gulf of Guinea of the Atlantic Ocean. The country has 36 States and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) categorized into six (6) geo-political zones.

Particularly the North-Central Region comprises of Abuja-FCT, Kogi, Kwara, Niger, Nasarawa and Plateau states.

**Ethnicity:** Nigeria has over 250 ethnic groups with Hausa-Fulani, Igbo, Yoruba in the majority.<sup>4</sup>

**Direct Actors:**  
Suspected ethnic militias.

**Affected Persons:**  
Community residents.

**Interested Actors:**  
Federal Government, Plateau State Governments, Nigeria State Police Force (NPF), Nigerian Military, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Department of State Service (DSS), Operation Safe Haven (OPSH), Berom Youth Moulders - Association (BYM), Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association (MACBAN), Middle Belt Forum (MBF), Amnesty International, Nigerian Red Cross Society, National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), State

The escalation of armed violence by suspected ethnic militias in Plateau state particularly with the recent coordinated attacks continues to exacerbate state fragility and heighten humanitarian concerns. The frequency of these unprovoked armed attacks on rural communities in the state has generated widespread condemnation and concerns around public safety. More worrisome is the perceived inactions of government and security agencies to early warning information of threats of attack as witnessed in the affected Local Government Areas (LGAs) of the state. Poor communication mechanisms, delayed deployment of security personnel to volatile areas and the inadequacies of government's operational strategies have been attributed to the prevalence of armed attacks.

Between December 23 and 25, 2023, suspected ethnic militias invaded about 25 communities of Bokkos, Barkin Ladi and Mangu LGAs of Plateau state and reportedly killed about 195 people (including 23 females and 2 children) with atleast 300 others injured<sup>7</sup>. Further assessments of the conflict situation revealed that an estimated 1,300 houses, 27 motorcycles and 8 vehicles were set ablaze<sup>8</sup> with several farm produce looted and over 10,000 people internally displaced<sup>9</sup>. The affected villages include Kamar Peli, Mai Yanga, Ndun, Ngyong, Sundul, Sanyang, Murfet, Makunday, Tamiso, Tuje, Chirang, Tahore, Gawarba, Bodel, Yalya Nono, Dares, Mufet, Ndares, Meyenga, Darwat, and Butura Kampani in Bokkos LGA; and NTV, Hurum, and Darawat in Barkin Ladi LGA, amongst others. The risk of a conflict spillover into neighbouring communities and LGAs in the state remains imminent.

As affected communities continue to count their losses, another surprise attack was reportedly launched by 1.00 a.m on December 31, 2023 by suspected ethnic militia in Kwahaslalek Community, Mangu LGA of Plateau State, resulting in the death of two (2) people and one (1) other injured<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> <https://taroktv.com.ng/blog/posts/LIST-of-PLATEAU-STATE-INDIGENOUS-TRIBE> (Map of Plateau State)

<sup>2</sup> [www.wanep.org/news](http://www.wanep.org/news)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1122838/population-of-nigeria/#:~:text=As%20of%20December%202023%2C%20Nigeria's,most%20populous%20country%20in%20Africa>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> <https://dailytrust.com/plateau-killings-over-300-dead-6000-displaced-in-2-months-group/#:~:text=Over%20300%20lives%20have%20been,the%20most%20urgency%20it%20deserves.%E2%80%9D;>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.sbintel.com/2023/07/daily-watch-plateau-death-toll-surpasses-300-1-5-million-ghanaian-youths-unemployed-q3-2022/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://tribuneonline.ng/land-grabbing-ethnic-cleansing-political-penetration-responsible-for-plateau-attacks-nwatri/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://leadership.ng/northern-can-fumes-over-plateau-killings-urges-proactive-measures/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2023/12/plateau-over-100-persons-killed-221-houses-burnt-in-communities-attacks/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://punchng.com/plateau-killings-dont-allow-nigeria-become-ungovernable-under-you-can-tells-tinubu/>

<sup>11</sup> Report from PARTNER Community-Based Structures in Kwahaslalek Community, Mangu LGA of Plateau State by 4.03 am on December 31, 2023. The PARTNER (Peace Action for Rapid and Transformative Nigerian Early Response) program is a 5-year USAID funded program and implemented by a consortium of partners including WANEP-Nigeria.

<sup>12</sup> <https://dailytrust.pressreader.com/article/281633900044313>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nCspX2zafE>; <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2023/12/horror-without-end-plateau-village-gets-fresh-attack-notice/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://punchng.com/outrage-as-plateau-massacre-claims-150-over-10000-displaced/>; <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2023/12/horror-without-end-plateau-village-gets-fresh-attack-notice/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://guardian.ng/news/plateau-attack-mufwang-says-terrorists-occupied-schools-for-years/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nCspX2zafE>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.channelstv.com/2023/12/11/gunmen-attack-plateau-community-kill-four/>

### Previous Recorded Armed Attacks in Plateau State Between April and July 2023:

The sustained violent attacks in Plateau State linked to the quest for land grabbing and ethnic cleansing, amongst other factors, resulted in the fatalities of 346 people with 6,603 households affected and 18,751 people internally displaced between April 17 and July 10, 2023 in Mangu, Bokkos, Barkin Ladi, Riyom, Bassa, Jos North and Mikang Local Government Areas (LGAs).<sup>5</sup>

Out of the total number of IDPs, widows and children accounted for 2,081 and 6,066 orphans between the ages of 0-5 years old respectively<sup>6</sup>.

Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), Northern Senators Forum, Northern Elders Forum, Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Nigeria Union of Journalist (NUJ), Plateau Indigenous Development Association (PIDAN), Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), International organisations and the Media.

Similarly, on December 21, 2023, two (2) people including a 19-year old were allegedly killed and one (1) other injured in an attack carried out by suspected ethnic militias in Gana Ropp Village, Barkin Ladi LGA of Plateau state<sup>11</sup>. Prior, community residents had recounted an intelligence report of an impending attack on the communities by unknown assailants during the festive period. This was also corroborated by a security analyst, Rev. Ladi Thompson, who revealed that threat letters were dispatched to the affected LGAs in November 2023 with details to resume violence on December 15, 2023.<sup>12</sup>

Again, the Northern Elders Forum (NEF) have expressed concerns over the recurring attacks despite claims by the Nigerian Military of receiving and responding to 37 distress calls from different locations in the state.<sup>13</sup>

Lack of temporary shelters for internally displaced persons in the affected communities pose another major humanitarian concern. According to the Plateau State Governor, Caleb Mutfwang, for over 5 years about 64 villages in Barkin Ladi and neighbouring Riyom LGA have been displaced and currently being inhabited by these suspected assailants<sup>14</sup>. Other security analysts have stated a higher statistics of over 112 displaced communities in the state.<sup>15</sup>

To mitigate the impact of the crisis, security agencies have deployed armed operational forces to the affected areas to forestall further attacks, apprehend the perpetrators of the crime and also assess the level of damages. Additionally, the presidency through the Vice-President, Senator Kashim Shettima, conducted a visit to the state on December 27, 2023, to commiserate with the affected victims, while the Federal and State Government have commenced the distribution of relief materials to the affected victims.

#### Other recorded attacks in Plateau State in the month of December 2023 include:

- *On December 10, 2023, four (4) people were reportedly killed and several others injured in an attack carried out by suspected ethnic militias in Gudum Village, Mangu LGA of Plateau State. The target of the attackers was the ward head of the village whose residence was set ablaze, with his wife and children held hostage while he escaped from the scene<sup>16</sup>.*

### RISK ANALYSIS:

- Plateau State has been a major flashpoint to recurrent dimensions of inter-communal clashes and ethno-religious tensions. The unabated activities of criminal gangs in the rural communities amid several collaborative peacebuilding efforts is indicative of the existing mutual suspicion between ethnic and religious groups in the state that has overtime strained inter-group relations/social cohesion and degenerated into violence.
- The prevailing security situation also reflects the perceived gap in the states' peace and security architecture. An instance is the effectiveness of the security and information centre established by the Plateau State Government in August 2023 to nip the current violence in the bud - *the security and information centre is designed to provide residents with access to report developments in their locations for timely intervention*. More so, the unhindered expansion and occupation of displaced communities by suspected militias as highlighted above by the State Government is suggestive of this existing security gap.
- The consequences of this criminal expansion has resulted in the disruption/closure of schools and primary health care centres in the affected communities. These restricted access to essential services contributes to the increasing number of out-of-school children and heightens communities vulnerability to health risks, criminal recruitment and sexual exploitations of women and children, amongst other threats to IDPs.
- In addition, the continued threat of violence in the state weakens the economic potentials of the affected Local Government Areas (LGAs) who are predominantly agrarian, and also impacts negatively on the delivery of democratic dividends. The former has adverse impact on food security, price food volatility, household food consumption and income of affected communities.
- The attacks by these criminals gangs have again heightened public concern around the utility of self-defence and the formation of informal community security to address protracted violence and complement the dearth of security presence in the local communities. The rise in alternative local security mechanisms have resulted in

weapon proliferation and further amplified the trust and confidence deficits among populations in the security sector.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- The Federal and State Governments should continue to strengthen the capacity of security agencies and increase security presence in the affected local communities to protect human lives and ensure law and order.
- The State Government in partnership with security agencies and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to strengthen community dialogue and mediation among local actors including traditional/religious leaders and women/youth groups, amongst others to bolster peace and security in communities.
- The Federal and State Governments in collaboration with the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), CSOs, and other humanitarian agencies should increase support for affected victims beyond the provision of relief materials to include access to health, psychosocial and livelihoods assistance to rebuild their lives.

