



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

Vol. 1

Location: PLATEAU STATE

Issue: 126 people killed, over 25 others injured and over 1,820 internally displaced in coordinated attacks carried out by suspected ethnic militias between January 31 and 14 April 2025

Date: APRIL 15, 2025

COMMUNITY PROFILING	CRITICAL STAKEHOLDERS	INCIDENT PROFILING
<p>Population: Plateau State has an estimated population of approximately 5.07 million people as of 2025.²</p> <p>Basic Demography: Plateau State is located in the Middle Belt within the North Central region, one of the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria. It shares borders with Kaduna, Bauchi, Taraba, and Nasarawa States.</p> <p>LGA: It comprises of 17 Local Government Areas.</p> <p>Ethnicity: The state is home to over 40 ethnic groups, including Afizere, Amo, Anaguta, Aten, Atyap, Bache, Berom, Bijim, Bogghom, Buji, Fier, Goemai, Irigwe, Jarawa, Jipal, Jukun, Kadung, and Kofyar (comprising Doemak, Kwalla, and Mernyang), as well as Miship, Montol,</p>	<p>Direct Actors: Suspected ethnic Militias</p> <p>Affected Persons: Community residents.</p> <p>Interested Actors: Federal Government, Plateau State Governments, Nigeria Police Force (NPF), Nigerian Military, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Department of State Service (DSS), Operation Safe Haven (OPSH), Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association (MACBAN), Middle Belt Forum (MBF), Berom Youth Moulders Association (BYMA) Amnesty International, Nigerian Red Cross Society, National Emergency</p>	<p>The escalation of armed violence by suspected ethnic militias in Plateau State particularly the recent coordinated attacks continue to exacerbate fragility and humanitarian challenges. The frequency of these unprovoked armed attacks on rural communities in the state has generated widespread condemnation and intensified fears over public safety. Additional to this is the seeming inactions of government and security agencies to early warning information on 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. The motive behind the attacks, which targeted rural communities and Local Government Areas (LGAs), remains unclear. However, the incident represents the most severe outbreak of violence in the region since December 2023, during which over 100 people were killed, with several others displaced, and significant property destruction was recorded across the same districts.</p> <p>Between March 27 and April 2, 2025, suspected ethnic militias allegedly carried out a series of coordinated attacks across five communities in Bokkos Local Government Area (LGA), Plateau State. The attacks resulted in the death of 62 people, including 23 women and 2 children, with 22 others injured.^{5, 6} The affected communities include Ruwi, Daffo (Daffo Ward), Gwande, Hurti, Manguna in the areas. Further assessments of the conflict situation revealed that several houses were set ablaze and over 1,820 people internally displaced</p>

¹ https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Map-of-Plateau-State-showing-the-study-area-Keys-Shows-the-study-area-Source-lotscroll_fig1_343775328

² Plateau The state has an estimated population of approximately 5.07 million people as of 2025.

⁵ <https://leadership.ng/gunmen-kill-10-mourners-at-wake-keep-in-plateau/>

⁶ <https://punchng.com/death-toll-in-plateau-attacks-hits-52-2/>

Mushere, Mwaghavul, Ngas, Piapung, Pyem, Ron-Kulere, Talet, Tarok, Tiv, and Youm. These ethnic groups are predominantly agrarian, sharing similar cultural practices, traditional institutions, and communal ways of life.³

Similar Armed

Attacks in Plateau State

Between December 23 and

31 2023: The sustained violent attacks in Plateau State, linked to the quest for land grabbing and ethnic cleansing among other factors, resulted in the deaths of 199 people, affected 1,300 households, and displaced 10,000 individuals between December 23 and 31, 2023, in Bokkos, Barkin Ladi, and Mangu Local Government Areas (LGAs).⁴

Management Agency (NEMA), State.

in the affected communities.⁷ The attack also led to the destruction of several properties in the State.

On 11th April 2025, three (3) males including a minor were reportedly killed in an attack carried out by suspected armed gang at Zogu Community in Miango District, Bassa LGA of Plateau State.⁸

On 14th April 2025, fifty-one (51) people including over 12 females and 18 children were reportedly killed, four (4) people injured, several properties including houses set ablaze, and properties looted in an attack carried out by suspected armed militia at Zike and Kimapa communities in Bassa LGA of Plateau State.⁹ Amid these recent attacks, the State Governor Caleb Mutfwang has labeled these actions as “genocide sponsored by terrorists,” noting that armed militias have seized control of over 64 communities, renaming and occupying lands throughout the state.¹⁰

Other similar recorded attacks in Plateau State in the month of January and March 2025 include:

Between January 31 and March 26, 2025, seven (7) people were allegedly killed and others injured with several people including females abducted in an attack carried out by suspected armed militias across several communities in Shendai, Bwall, Shimankar Communities in Qua'an Pan, Shendam and Barkin Ladi LGAs of Plateau State.¹¹

RESPONSE BY ACTORS

- In response to the current volatile security in the Plateau State, relevant stakeholders are implementing a swift and multi-faceted response involving various agencies. The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), in collaboration with the Plateau State Emergency Management Agency (PLASEMA), has commenced a rapid assessment of communities affected by the recent attacks in Bokkos Local Government Area of Plateau State.
- Delivery of relief materials approved by the Federal Government, in line with the directive of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, to ensure swift humanitarian assistance to the victims.
- The General Officer Commanding (GOC) of the 3-Division Nigerian Army Headquarters in Bassa and the troops of the Operation Safe Haven have been deployed to deescalate tension and bolster security in Bassa and other affected areas, including the apprehension of the perpetrators and their sponsors.
- The Plateau State Governor, Caleb Mutfwang, announced a restriction on night grazing and a ban on transportation of cattle by vehicle in the state after 7.00 pm.

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plateau_State

⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plateau_State

⁷ <https://punchng.com/plateau-attacks-nema-assesses-communities-says-1820-persons-displaced/>

⁸ <https://dailypost.ng/2025/04/12/father-two-sons-killed-as-fresh-violence-erupts-in-plateau-state/>

⁹ <https://www.channelstv.com/2025/04/14/40-people-killed-in-fresh-plateau-attack/>

¹⁰ over 64 communities, renaming and occupying lands throughout the state.

¹¹ <https://punchng.com/terrorists-kill-plateau-couples/>

- The Governor also announced restrictions on the use of motorcycles from 7:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. across the state until further notice, as part of efforts to restore calm and strengthen vigilance.
- Swift response of the security operatives of the Nigeria Police have also led to the arrest of two suspects in connection with the recent attacks in Bokkos.

RISK ANALYSIS:

Plateau State continues to be a major hotspot for recurring inter-communal violence and ethno-religious tensions. Despite the various collaborative peacebuilding initiatives, the continued activities of armed criminal groups in rural communities persist. This highlights pervasive underlying issues particularly the deep-rooted mistrust between ethnic and religious groups. This mutual suspicion has weakened social cohesion over time, and often degenerates into violent confrontations.

The prevailing insecurity reflects a broader gap within the state's peace and security architecture. Of particular concern is the unchallenged expansion and occupation of displaced communities by suspected militias, as acknowledged by the state government. This development not only undermines territorial integrity but also signals a breakdown in the enforcement of law and order. The occupation and violence have directly disrupted access to essential services. Schools and primary health care centres in affected areas have either been destroyed or rendered non-functional, forcing residents especially women and children into increasingly vulnerable situations. This volatility coupled with restricted access to healthcare, has heightened the risks of disease outbreaks, criminal exploitation, and sexual and gender-based violence, particularly among internally displaced populations.

Similarly, the attacks have had a devastating impact on the livelihoods and food security of residents. Most of the affected communities are agrarian and rely heavily on farming for their survival. Farmers have been displaced from their lands, agricultural activities have been disrupted, and local markets destabilized. These challenges could potentially worsen food insecurity and reduce household incomes, creating additional stress on already fragile and vulnerable communities.

The lack of a robust security presence in the affected communities, coupled with the failure of security agencies to act swiftly on early warning signals, has eroded public confidence in the state's ability to protect its citizens and maintain law and order. In a region with lingering ethnic and religious tensions, communities now feel increasingly abandoned by the state. This sense of neglect is compounded by reports of over 60 communities being occupied and renamed by non-state actors, signaling a disturbing trend of armed militias asserting territorial control. The absence of effective security forces in these areas has left local populations vulnerable to escalating violence and insecurity, while further weakening the authority of the state.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Federal and State Governments should continue to strengthen the capacity of security agencies and increase the number of security operatives in vulnerable and high-risk communities, with a clear mandate to prevent further attacks, reclaim occupied territories, and maintain law and order..
- The State Government should strengthen its Early Warning and Early Response (EWER) mechanism by investing in localized conflict monitoring and response systems involving community leaders, youth groups, civil society organizations and security agencies as well as initiate technology-based platforms for timely reporting for intervention before violence escalates.
- 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), civil society organizations (CSOs), and other humanitarian agencies, should

- increase support for affected victims beyond the provision of relief materials to include access to healthcare, psychosocial support, and livelihoods assistance to help them rebuild their lives.
- As a long term strategy the State Government should integrate Peace Education and Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) Education in schools and religious institutions for promoting peace, tolerance, and conflict prevention through curriculum reforms, interfaith programs, and extracurricular activities in schools, mosques, and churches.

