

The Poor Optics over the Carnage in Plateau....

By Ayoola Ajanaku

“Nero fiddles while Rome burns”....

The gory and heartbreaking news of armed groups killing at least 160 people in Plateau State Nigeria via a series of coordinated attacks on communities on Christmas eve that spilled over 24 hours in Barkin Ladi and Bokkos greeted the tranquility that enveloped the Yuletide season. The carnage was yet to subside when Plateau State governor, Caleb Muftwang alongside twenty of his counterparts from other states and the Vice President, Senator Kashim Shettima, paid homage to the president Bola Tinubu at his residence nestled in Bourdillon in Lagos on Tuesday to mark the festive season. Mr President, it's stranger than fiction on the communication hara-kiri by the presidential team laden with a litany of pluri-faceted persona's who are caught pants down on numerous occasions. Its imperative they take home lessons and act in a coordinated manner to address issues of national discourse and how it affects their principal. The leveraging of birthday wishes to the secretary to the government of the federation, Senator George Akume superseded the pogrom in Plateau State. While the human tragedy in Plateau occurred since Saturday and lasted till Christmas Eve. It is highly insensitive and an absurdity beyond comprehension by the presidential X handle, formerly twitter – Please check timeline for contextual alignment.



The pathetic optics of sub national helmsmen clad in immaculate "Agbada" attires backslapping handshakes despite the Christmas Eve attacks in Bokkos and Barkin-Ladi LGA's by suspected armed gunmen who sent 162 innocent and defenseless citizens to their early graves and left scores of injured individual's reeks of bourgeoisie ala "Owambeism" mantra with high end luxury lifestyle laden with devilish gumption. The photo-op of the president, vice president and governors on the pages of major dailies the day after makes one cringe with fear with the allusion of Nero fiddles while Rome burns. All it takes is for the multitude of governors to join the president and C-in-C to address the nation on the well-manicured lawns of the presidential pad via the dais emblazoned with Nigeria's coat of arms. This wartime message (When scores of citizens of a nation are murdered in cold blood, it calls for a coercive reaction to address such satanic acts) will instill confidence on the state of affairs therein.

Lest we forget, the president has made clarion calls earlier before he ascended into Nigeria's presidency on the need to confront terrorism. As it stands right now that what has changed so far? Except the recurring decimal of promising

to bring the perpetrators to book, the status quo is still maintained.

Mr President's statement via his X handle earlier has promised the deployment of armed forces to address this menace. It's noteworthy to state that the Operation Safe Haven (OPSH) led by the General Officer Commanding (GOC) 3 Division Nigeria Army is domiciled in these troubled areas. The only military asset not present in Plateau is the Nigeria Navy thanks to the absence of littoral ecosystem therein. It's appropriate to state in public domain that Nigeria armed forces are dealing with a formidable foe that's well grounded in psychological and asymmetric warfare. The attacks earlier on the communities in Plateau are standard MO to strike fear into the hearts of victims. Who attacks vulnerable people on Christmas Eve? They say time heals wounds, but this is a scar that will defy this action as Xmas season is a season of introspection and whenever they cast their minds of this day it will be spaghetti of thoughts laden with sadness, sorrow and despair.

Who says such acts will stop after the much highlighted condemnation and outcry from home and abroad so far? The perpetrators of these dastardly acts bestrode the space with impunity. The Vice President should be delegated to Barkin-Ladi and Bokkos LGA's with immediate alacrity just like he was on ground following the aftermath of the fatal bombing at Tundun-Biri, Igabi LGA in Kaduna State earlier. The bereaved families and survivors need all the help they can get in these harrowing moments. It's not for the faint-hearted; as those involved didn't commit any crimes except that they are Nigerians. When have we descended into a Hobbesian state where life is short and brutish?

Amnesty International criticized the government after the attacks, saying in a post on X, formerly Twitter, that "the Nigerian authorities have been failing to end frequent deadly attacks on the rural communities of Plateau State". The presidential candidate of the Labour Party (LP) in the last election, Peter Obi also reiterated that "Even warring nations don't experience this", in his reaction to the Plateau massacre.

At this juncture, it's imperative for the helmsman of Plateau State to perish the thought of hosting the proposed music jamboree that would feature Haitian born American

pop artiste, Wyclef Jon and M.I. Abaga. The Commissioner for Information should be prominent in public domain with important details for evacuations, IDP's, help lines for support and assistance amongst others. Now is not a time to play hide and seek. The repose of the departed souls is all that matters with immediate swing into action to address displaced persons via the state emergency apparatus in conjunction with NEMA. The number one citizen, chief-of-staff and the EXCO need to embark on an assessment tour of the affected areas. Now is not the time for donning well starched "Agbada's" in public domain – It's the time to sport jeans pants and polos to commiserate with weary souls who have been robbed of the joy of celebrating the Xmas season with their loved ones. The gruesome sight of charred and burned down buildings littered with bodies of young and old is beyond beggar's belief.

May the good Lord heal all those who are in pain at this time? My heart goes out to the people of Plateau State who are seemingly abandoned to their fate at this rate with non-existent succour from any quarter whatsoever.

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