

2 Killed, 40 Cows Rustled In Fresh Benue Attack



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At least two people have been reportedly killed and more than 40 cows rustled in the early hours of Thursday after gunmen attacked Okpafie community in Okonobo Ward of Okpokwu Local Government Area of Benue State.

Locals said the attackers struck at about 1:00 a.m., killing a cattle owner identified simply as Benjamin before making away with the livestock.

The locals, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said most of the youths in the community were watching the FIFA World Cup match when the attackers invaded, therefore delaying the community's response.

One of them said that local vigilantes later engaged the fleeing suspects in a gun battle around the Aidogodo axis, during which a vigilante member was shot dead while attempting to stop the rustlers.

Confirming the incident, the Chairman of Okpokwu LGA, Adah Inalegwu, said about 12 heavily armed men wielding AK-47 rifles carried out the attack.

He said the gunmen had made several unsuccessful attempts to attack the cattle owner in the past before returning in the early hours of Thursday to kill him and steal his cattle.

“The owner was sleeping when they attacked him. They neutralised him before gaining access to the cattle and carting away over 40 cows,” he said.

He said security operatives, including the police and the military, had launched a manhunt for the fleeing suspects, who were believed to have escaped into nearby forests.

The council chairman alleged that the attackers were cattle rustlers operating from outside the community, describing the incident as the third such attack on Okpafie.

Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO) for Benue Command, DSP Udeme Edet, however, said she was yet to get reports on the incidents.