

Suspected armed herders kill 16 in renewed Benue attack

Johnson Babajide July 12, 2026



Benue map



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No fewer than 16 people were feared dead in an early-hour attack by suspected armed herdsmen in Otukpo Nobi, Otukpo Local Government Area of Benue.

Some members of the community who spoke to the Nigerian Tribune on Sunday said that the assailants stormed the community in the early hours of Sunday and shot sporadically.

Consequently, some women and youths from the community stormed major streets of Otukpo, including the palace of the Ochidoma, protesting the killing.

As of the time of filing this report, the protesters were reported to have blocked all the entrances to the ancient Otukpo town.

A female protester who identified herself as Comfort Inalegwu, our correspondent, said in a telephone interview on Sunday that "Some Fulani herdsmen between 3:30 and 4:30 am today attacked Nobi community in Otukpo, shooting sporadically, which made residents flee.

"At least 16 people were killed this morning during the attack, and I lost my sister and two of her children to the attack. They entered her house and shot them. Their corpses are now at the morgue of Otukpo General Hospital."

According to her, several people were still missing, while many others who were injured during the attack were receiving treatment at the general hospital.

Mrs Inalegwu threatened that women would continue to protest and ensure that the election is not held in the area unless the government stops the incessant killings of innocent people in Idoma land.

The Chairman of Otukpo LGA, Maxwell Ogiri, could not be reached for comment as of the time of filing this report.

Also, the spokesperson for the State Command, DSP Udemé Edet, could not be reached as of the time of filing this report.

But the State Governor, Hyacinth Alia, has condemned the killing, describing it as 'not only a breach of peace, but also a barbaric and inhuman assault on the sanctity of life and the collective soul of the people of Benue State.'

This is contained in a statement issued on Sunday by the governor's Chief Press Secretary, Kula Tersoo, and made available to journalists in Makurdi.

The statement read in parts, "The suspected armed herdsmen reportedly invaded Akpachi Village in Akpa, Otukpo Local Government Area, between 3:00 a.m. and 4:00 a.m. while residents were asleep. The attackers killed scores of people, while many others sustained varying degrees of injuries.

Alia, who expressed sadness over the attack and killing, said, "These acts of mindless bloodshed are a direct attempt to sabotage the progress of our state.

"Governor Alia shares in the grief and anger of the people of Otukpo and the entire Benue South Senatorial District, saying, ' Your lives are precious, and I can assure you that your ancestral lands will not be surrendered to fear."

The governor, who said that the people of the state have consistently demonstrated remarkable restraint and commitment to peace, however, warned that such restraint must never be mistaken for weakness.

While consoling the people in Otukpo, the governor said, "My government stands firmly with you, and we will not allow our communities to be turned into killing fields."

The governor directed all security agencies operating in the state to liaise with their counterparts in neighbouring states and to "swing into action" with renewed vigour by intensifying surveillance and patrols across the affected communities and border areas.

He also called on security agencies to ensure the arrest and prosecution of the perpetrators of the attack, and to deploy additional personnel and resources to protect vulnerable communities and prevent further attacks.

While calling on Benue residents to remain vigilant, the governor urged every citizen to cooperate with the police and military by providing timely and credible intelligence, saying, "Security is a collective responsibility, and your information is a vital tool in our defence."