

Four killed, women captured, tortured, another missing in fresh herders' attacks on Benue communities



By Peter Duru, Makurdi

At least four person have been reportedly killed, several women brutally tortured, and another declared missing following an attack by suspected armed herdsmen on Udei and Nzorov communities of Guma Local Government Area, LGA, of Benue State.

The attacks reportedly occurred when a group of displaced persons went to fetch firewood at Tse Nyamkume Village along the Yogbo-Udei Road, Monday evening. The victims were said to be returning to Udei, where they had sought refuge after fleeing earlier violence in their home communities.

Among those attacked was one Kenneth Gbayier, a native of Mbalagh, who had taken shelter in Udei after previous attacks forced him to flee his village. Gbayier was said to be in the company of another young man from Saawuan Gboodo Village and several women when they were ambushed by the armed assailants.

According to a community source, Gbayier was shot during the attack and repeatedly macheted on the legs and head, sustaining injuries that eventually led to his death.

“The attackers opened fire on them and then used machetes. Kenneth did not survive the brutal assault.

“The women in the group were captured and severely tortured by the attackers, while the second young man managed to escape into the nearby bush as the assailants chased him. He still remains missing, with no trace of his whereabouts as we speak,” he said.

He disclosed that the latest incident occurred just two days after another deadly attack along the Ajimaka Road, where two Tiv travelers and a security personnel escorting them were reportedly killed after armed herders laid an ambush.

According to him, another farmer was also allegedly macheted around the Ahentse axis of Nzorov Council Ward, also in Guma Local Government Area, within the same period.

He lamented that armed herders had relentlessly invaded rural settlements and destroying farmlands of the people “and the situation is worsening food insecurity and deepening the humanitarian crisis in the state.

“We are therefore calling on security personnel to urgently intervene before the situation escalates further.

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“Also residents of Udei and neighboring communities have been warned to exercise extreme caution, as movement along bush paths and rural routes have become increasingly dangerous due to the persistent attacks,” he stressed.

Contacted, the Police Public Relations Officer, Deputy Superintendent, DSP, Udeme Edet said she had not received reports of the incidents.