

Benue: Panic in Agatu as suspected herdsmen kill farmer, chase residents off farmlands



By Peter Duru, Makurdi

Tension has gripped parts of Agatu Local Government Area, LGA, of Benue State following the killing of a local woodcutter and farm operator by suspected armed herdsmen.

The victim, identified as an indigene of Enungba and resided in Oshigbudu, was reportedly attacked on Monday while working on a farm located between Atakpa and Obagaji communities.

According to local sources, the deceased and a colleague had gone to the farm to cut trees when they suddenly started hearing gunshots.

“We heard two gunshots, and from a distance we saw Fulani men approaching. We shouted, ‘It’s Fulani, let’s go,’ and started running,” a source who recounted the incident said.

The source explained that the attackers immediately chased the people and the victim, who could not keep pace with his colleague, was gunned down.

“They chased them and shot the one who could not run fast. He died instantly, while the other person managed to escape,” the source added.

He claimed that the attackers were part of armed herdsmen groups currently operating across the Agatu axis, making it increasingly unsafe for farmers to access their lands.

According to him, the herders might have moved into the area from neighbouring Apa LGA following recent security operations in that part of the state.

“These are the same herders who fled Apa when security personnel confronted them with superior firepower. They have now dispersed into nearby communities where they carry out unprovoked attacks,” he said.

He lamented that the incident had heightened fears among locals, many of whom he said can no longer safely tend to their farms, raising concerns about food security in the area.

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“That is why we are appealing to the government and security agencies to redouble their efforts to bring an end to these attacks and make our communities safe again.” he said.

Efforts to reach the Police Public Relations Officer, DSP Udeme Edet, for comment were unsuccessful as of the time of filing this report.