

## 2 KILLED IN BENUE FULANI/TIV CLASH



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Two persons were reportedly killed yesterday in fresh violence between Fulani cattle breeders and Tiv natives at Adeke community in Makurdi, Benue State.

The development, which is the latest in series of attacks on the community and other neighbouring suburbs of Makurdi town, forced residents to flee their homes in droves.

Witnesses said that the latest attack was carried out by suspected herders who were heavily armed and had stationed themselves at strategic locations in Adeke, Kighir and the vicinity around the police barracks.

According to them, an Igbo man and a Fulani herder were killed in the crossfire before the arrival of security agents to the area, while many houses were burnt down in the process.

"We didn't sleep last night for fear. You can only imagine how we felt when the sounds of gunshot rented the air between 7pm and 10pm. My family and I managed to escape the area at 11pm to take refuge in a relative's house in the town," a woman explained.

But the Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) in charge of operations, Mike Zuokumor, at a press briefing in Makurdi yesterday assured residents in the state of their safety, saying that he came on a fact-finding mission to explore possible ways of ending the crisis.

According to him, after meeting with relevant stakeholders and visiting the crisis-prone areas, he came to a conclusion that the problem had not yet defied solutions provided the parties involved will lay down their arms.

"The problem does not defy any solution yet with the cooperation of stakeholders. People are advised to lay down arms and embrace peace. Residents should be encouraged to partner with police and not take laws into their hands as the police will not tolerate breakdown of order," he said.

Contacted, the Secretary of Cattle Breeders in the state, Garus Gololo, described the fighting as 'madness', saying, however, that security operatives had brought the situation under control.

Similarly, an aide to the governor of the state on Fulani Matters, Shettima Mohammed said it was true that Fulani and Tiv people fought in the area on Friday night.

"It is true. Fighting is going on in Adeke right now. From the information at my disposal, the Tiv youths yesterday attacked the Fulani men who were grazing their cow around Adeke and killed one person. That is why the two parties are fighting," he said.

However, police spokesman DSP Daniel Ezeala denied that there was any fresh trouble in the area, maintaining that the people fled their abodes over rumours of Fulani attack.

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