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# FARMERS/HERDERS CLASH: UNEASY CALM AT GWAGWALADA COMMUNITY



Category: City news Published on Wednesday, 11 June 2014 05:00

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- . Crisis claims 4 herders
- . FCT minister vows to punish perpetrators

The incessant clashes between farmers and Fulani herders in some parts of the country, especially in Nasarawa, Plateau and Taraba states, is no longer news to Nigerians. The crises, despite efforts being made by the government to bring them to an end, have not abated, claiming several lives of the people and property worth billions of naira.

Gwagwalada Area Council, which is among the six area councils in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), also recently witnessed three clashes that involved the farmers and Fulani cattle rearers.

In 2012, two persons lost their lives after a crisis broke out between the herders and farmers at Gwako village, of the council, which forced mostly the Fulanis to relocate to permanent site of the University of Abuja, while the FCT minister quickly moved in to put the matter under control.

Just two months ago, another crisis broke out at Ibwa village, in Gwagwalada Area Council, which left another Fulani man dead, after a misunderstanding between him and an indigene of the community. Security was beefed in the area to put the matter under control.

Yet again, on June 6, Paikon-Kore, an agrarian community whose inhabitants are mostly farmers, was thrown into pandemonium following an outbreak of a clash between the farmers and herders that left four herders dead and 13 others with machete cuts.

The clash created an uneasy calm among the Fulani cattle rearers after discovering that all those killed and left with various degrees of injuries were all their kinsmen.

Also Chronicle observed that the Fulani men all wore glooming faces with their youth carrying cutlasses and sticks, positioned themselves at the camp when the representatives of the FCT minister, Senator Usman Jibrin Wowo, traditional rulers of Gwagwalada and Zuba, chairman of the council, Alhaji Abubakar Jibrin Giri and security personnel, went to appeal to them to remain on the side of law.

A Fulani elder at the camp, Alhaji Isah Ibrahim, looking gloomy and visibly angry, while

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narrating the incident to the officials, alleged that his kinsmen were attacked at Paikon-Kore market.

He told them that a misunderstanding ensued after a 10-year-old Fulani boy, who went to herd cows in the bush, allowed some of the cows to climb yam ridges, making the farmers to allegedly use cutlasses to inflict injuries on the boy.

"When the boy cried back home with blood all over his body, there were some of our boys who wanted to go and retaliate but I prevented them. Later, some of our Fulani kinsmen went to Paiko market and were attacked by some Gbagyi indigenes and three of them were hacked to death," he said.

He alleged that two Fulani huts were set ablaze by the youth, appealing to the government to do justice and bring the perpetrators to book.

On his part, the village head of Paikon-Kore community, Malam Yusuf Barwa, condemned the attack on the Fulani herders.

He regretted that despite the efforts he has been making to guarantee peace among herders and farmers in the areas, some people have taken law into their hands to cause crisis at the community.

He appealed to the herders at the community not to embark on any reprisal, promising that the palace will work closely with the council authorities to ensure that those behind the crisis face the wrath of the law.

The FCT Minister, Senator Bala Mohammed, represented by his Senior Special Assistant on Political Matters, Senator Usman Jibrin Wowo, condemned the attack.

The minister vowed that the FCT administration would not leave any stone unturned to ensure that those who perpetrated the act were brought to book.

He said: "We are hoping that peace will prevail since we have spoken to both sides. We have spoken to Fulani communities and we also spoken to Gbagyi communities and from all indications, it appears that they all heard what we have said. And the FCT administration will explore all avenues to ensure that the perpetrators are brought to book.

He, however, said there was need for the herders and farmers at the community to live together in peace, assuring that FCT administration will always help to achieve that in the territory.

Aso Chronicle reports that 13 injured victims were on admission at the accident and emergency unit of the University of Abuja Teaching Hospital at Gwagwalada, when representatives of the FCT minister visited.

Commenting on the incident, Chairman of Gwagwalada Area Council, Alhaji Abubakar Jibrin Giri, condemned the attack on the herders, saying there was need for indigenes of the community and Fulani to live in harmony.

He said no society will develop when there is no peace among the people, particularly appealing to the Fulanis at Paikon-Kore community for calm.

"I want to assure that government will do everything possible to ensure that those behind this crisis are brought to book. And I also want to urge you not to be afraid to mention the names of any person behind this incident," he said.

The council chairman, however, noted that there was a grazing reserved carved for herders to rear their cows, adding that the owners of the area were yet to be compensated.

"The area council will intensify effort to ensure that the farmers are compensated for their farm land that was carved for the herders for grazing at the community and we will ensure that we foot the hospital bill of those that were injured," he assured.

Meanwhile, the Gwagwalada Divisional Police Officer, Mr. Patrick Daaor, has confirmed the death of four persons in the farmers/herders clash at Paikon-Kore community, saying it was the prompt intervention of the police that helped in curtailing the crisis.

Aso Chronicle learnt that funeral prayers were held for herders that died at the hospital, while the remaining two corpses of the herders, out of which one was discovered in a bush, were still at the hospitals morgue as at Friday.

Reacting, the FCT chapter chairman of the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria, Abdullahi Adamu, decried incessant attack on his kinsmen by farmers, especially in Gwagwalada Area Council, saying farmers used to accuse the Fulani of destroying their crops.

He said four herders were killed at Paiko market not at the farm as some people believed, while accusing some elders of Paikon-Kore community of instigating the crisis.

"When some of the victims were at the hospital, none of these elders came to show concern apart from Agora of Zuba, Chief of Gwagwalada and the council chairman, who led the delegation of the FCT minister, Senator Usman Jibrin Wowo, to sympathise with us."

He, therefore, appealed to the council authorities to liaise with the FCT administration on the need to bring to an end the incessant attack on Fulani, wondering why crisis always broke out between Fulani and the Gbagyi people.

"There are six area councils in FCT, but I am always disturbed that it is only in Gwagwalada Area Council that there is always a crisis between the Fulani and farmers, it now happened on three different occasions, I want to appeal to the FCT minister to quickly intervene and bring those behind the crisis to book.

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