

4 herders shot dead, cows stolen in Anambra attack

From Titus Eleweke, Awka

At least four herders have been shot dead in an attack on a settlement in Ogborji, Orumba South Local Government Area of Anambra State.

According to Alhaji Gidado Siddiki, Chairman of the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN), South-East Zone, many cows were stolen in the attack which happened on Saturday. Siddiki said over 20 Fulani herdsman were killed in Anambra alone from January to March 2021.

He disclosed this in Awka, Anambra State capital while briefing some journalists on the incessant attacks and killings of MACBAN members in the state and South-East zone in general.

Siddiki, who was visibly saddened, said the latest attack on his people took place at Mohammed Idris Herders' Settlement on Saturday.

He said he was told that gunmen entered the camp and started shooting and in the process four Fulani were killed, while their corpses were taken away, adding that hundreds of cows were stolen in the attack.

"One of the escaped herders called me and told me that some gunmen in

a Hilux vehicle with red cap invaded Mohammed Idris Herders' Settlement shooting sporadically and that led to the deaths of four of our members and hundreds of cows missing," he said.

He added that out of the four dead, police had recovered one corpse while three other corpses were yet to be accounted for.

He said they found where five cows were slaughtered in the area.

He said with the recent killing of the four herders, the total number of Fulani killed between January and early March 2021 in Anambra State alone is above 21.

He gave the names of the recent victims as Hadari Umaru, Hamidu Umaru, Aliu Idris and Hassan Idris.

He also disclosed that two herders were killed in the same manner in Ishiagu, Ivo Local Government Area of Ebonyi State, last week, while many had been killed this year alone.

Siddiki said until the recent attacks, members of MACBAN enjoyed cordial relationship with their host communities in the entire South East.

According to him, the Fulani in the zone were not attacking their hosts and were not carrying AK47 because they have been warned against that.

He said: "The Fulani people in the South-East are not violent and we are not here to undermine the business of the people of the area. So, I am surprised why my people have been killed unjustly.

"We have experienced a lot of challenges in the region, including the death of our members, despite our quick response whenever the issue of compensation arises. I am constrained to say this publicly because I can no longer hold the pains any more.

"My people have begun to think I have been compromised... keeping quiet over various killings of herders in the zone. They have accused me of not saying anything about the killings in the zone.

"My worry now is that time will come when they cannot listen to me again; then it would be very difficult to control and manage them. There is no issue of farmland damaged by our people that we did not pay," Siddiki lamented.

He called on the Anambra State government to take action to stop further attacks and killings of herders in the state.

Meanwhile, all calls and text messages put to the spokesman of Anambra State Police Command, CSP Haruna Mohammed, were not answered.