

Northern groups kick as gunmen kill 8 in Abia cattle market

From Linus Effiong (Umuahia),
Maryam Ahmadu-Suka (Kaduna),
Abdullateef Aliyu (Lagos) & Dalhatu
Liman (Abuja)

It was sombre yesterday as gunmen late Tuesday night invaded the New Cattle Market at Omumauzor in Ukwa West LGA of Abia State, killing eight traders from the North and slaughtering over 20 cows.

A high powered team of Abia State government led by the chief of staff to the governor, Professor Anthony Agbazuere, visited the market yesterday morning to assess the situation and sympathise with the traders.

A statement issued by the Commissioner for Information and Strategy, Eze Chikamnayo, on the incident, said the government was "shocked and saddened" by the killing of the "eight innocent citizens of our great country."

"We totally condemn this dastardly act together with its wicked perpetrators. We're working assiduously to provide succour to the families of the victims. Those who sustained injuries are currently receiving medical attention.

"We have equally started the immediate relocation of the traders while working out compensation for lost properties. We'll leave no stone unturned to ensure that the evil perpetrators are brought to justice," the statement added.

The Police Public Relations Officer in the state, SP Geoffrey Ogbonna, confirmed the attack and said no arrest had been made.

Asked for the identities of the victims, he said they were traders but their names had not been ascertained.

But the Chief Imam of Umuahia, Alhaji Mohamed Baraya, said nine traders and 20 cows were killed.

Attack unacceptable - Northern groups
Meanwhile, the Coalition of Northern Groups in Nigeria (CNG) and the Arewa

Youth Consultative Forum (AYCF) have condemned the gruesome murder of the traders.

They asked the Abia State government to fulfill its promise of bringing the killers to justice.

The CNG Spokesperson, Abdul-Azeez Suleiman, said the state government must act quickly to bring the culprits to book and warned that the North would no longer tolerate unwarranted attacks on its people living as minorities in the South East or any other part of the country.

"We have studied the unfolding events carefully and with considerable restraint and maturity, to the point of condoning and accommodating several unreasonable and unacceptable actions that have been perpetrated against northerners in the South East in particular.

"The recent attack in Abia has taken matters to a point whereby silence has become complicity and inaction is no longer an option in the face of unprovoked evictions, attacks and killings of northerners in various parts of the South East," he said.

Similarly, the National President of the AYCF, Alhaji Yerima Shettima, said the group was deeply concerned about the killing of the traders doing legitimate business.

While condemning the attack, he welcomed the prompt response of security agencies and urged the state government to pursue its promise to bring the killers to book, in the spirit of national unity and stability.

"The AYCF will be closely following the efforts of the Abia State government to fulfill its promise of providing compensation for the families and survivors of the attack. We pray this should be the last bad news we would hear about innocent northern traders, from not just Abia but the entire South east, in the spirit of national unity and stability," he added.