

25 killed in fresh attacks on Benue villages

From Hope Abah Emmanuel, Makurdi

At least 25 people were killed in the early hours of yesterday in a simultaneous attack on several villages of three local government areas of Benue State.

Our correspondent reports that villages in Guma, Logo and Tarka came under severe gunfire between 8pm on Monday and 3am on Tuesday in what appeared to be a coordinated siege by the armed men.

It was learnt that 15 corpses were recovered from Tyotugh community in Tarka LGA, nine from Guma and the body of a traditional ruler from Logo.

Villagers said the figures could be higher as the search for missing persons was still ongoing at the time of this report.

Chairman of Guma LGA, Caleb Aba, told our correspondent that seven people were killed in one fell

swoop at Tse-Sumaka village near Umenger in the Mbadwem council ward of Guma.

Aba blamed armed herders for the killings, saying the attack was unprovoked.

Also, the Special Adviser on Security to the Benue State governor, Lt Col. Paul Hemba (retd) told our correspondent via telephone that the total figures of death recorded could be higher than 25 as search efforts were ongoing in the bushes to trace the whereabouts of the missing persons.

He said, "So far, nine corpses were recovered from Guma. In Tarka, where am just coming from with the commissioner of police and commander of the 72 battalion, so far 15 corpses have been recovered but it's strongly suspected that more will be recovered in the bushes. So, we are arranging a patrol to comb

the bushes because some other persons have not been seen and they are still missing and it's also believed that some attackers left with some other persons alive.

"For now, those are the corpses we have physically seen and counted. When you consider all these things I have told you, the figure maybe higher. In Logo, a traditional ruler was (killed).

"Yes, they were suspected herders and the attacks happened about the same time in the night. Those injured and those who escaped the attacks confirmed that they were herders," Hemba added.

The Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), SP Catherine Anene, who confirmed the attack, said she was at the scene and would make details available later.

"The incident is confirmed. Corpses removed. The road is cleared. Investigation continues," Anene said.