

Gunmen kill 7 in Benue village market

From Hope Abah, Makurdi

Gunmen have reportedly killed seven people in an attack on a village market in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State.

Witnesses told our correspondent in Makurdi that the incident occurred on Tuesday when gunmen, believed to be local outlaws, rode into Gugu market in Kpav community on bikes and killed seven people.

One witness who preferred

to remain anonymous said the gunmen launched attacks in three places: Tor Donga in Utange council ward, Gugu in Michihe council ward, and another location in Mbacher council ward.

"I can't ascertain the number of casualties in the other two areas, apart from Gugu, where seven people were killed," the witness said.

Jonathan Agbidye, a lawmaker representing Katsina-Ala East constituency in the Benue State House of Assembly, told

journalists in Makurdi that the incident appeared to be a reprisal attack.

"People in that particular community were against the hoodlums. Luck ran out on them and they caught and killed two of the hoodlums in April. So this is just a revenge mission. But the place is calm now. We went there with the police this morning," Agbidye explained.

Also, Justine Shaku, the council chairman of Kastina-Ala LGA, confirmed that people were killed in his locality.

Shaku added that the incident happened on Tuesday evening.

Daily Trust identified one of the victims as Terhemba Aanger, whose younger brother recounted that he was shot in the head at point-blank range, shattering his skull.

He added that some people were still missing as they had not returned home since the market attack.

"The gunmen rode through the market, shooting sporadically and causing panic. My brother and six others who stood to

watch what was happening were rounded up and shot at close range," he said.

The incident occurred on the same day Governor Hyacinth Alia was on a thank-you tour in Sankera area. The market where the attack took place is just about 10 kilometres from the Akumé Atongo township stadium, where the political event was held.

When contacted, the police public relations officer, Benue State command, SP Catherine Anene, said she was not yet aware of the incident.