

Fresh attack on Benue's Agatu leaves 12 dead

From Hope Abah, Makurdi

At least 12 people were reportedly killed on Sunday night in a fresh attack on the Egwuma community in Agatu LGA of Benue State.

The villagers stated that armed invaders besieged the community around 4pm on Sunday, shooting sporadically at unarmed residents. The attack resulted in 12 fatalities and left many others injured.

This latest attack brings the total number of casualties to 30 in just one week.

The armed invaders previously attacked Olegomachi, where 18 people were killed on July 9, and in Ikpele, where five people were killed on July 10 and 11, and many houses were burned.

A resident of Egwuma, who pleaded anonymity, reported that as the bodies of the victims were being recovered, villagers, including those in about 10 neighbouring communities, including Ogumogbo, Ejimagga, Ejima-gochi and Warri, had already deserted their homes.

Godwin Edoh, the lawmaker

representing Agatu constituency in the state's House of Assembly, confirmed to our correspondent via phone that 12 people were killed in the Sunday attack on Egwuma.

Edoh expressed his frustration, stating, "We are tired, and the problem is continuing. That is why I'm complaining. The government has to be decisive about what to do about the area. It's so porous. Ogbumogbo, Ejima, and all those areas down to Ikpele have been deserted for close to a year now.

"So, it's like a herders' colony now. What the attackers do is bring their cattle from morning and stay to graze until they decide to leave and then come back again because the people have left the villages. There is no peace anywhere around there."

When contacted for comment, the state's Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), SP Catherine Anene, confirmed the incident but stated that she received reports of five people killed in the community. "There was an attack in Agatu with about five people killed," she said.