

# Gunmen kill 19 in Benue

From Hope Abah,  
Makurdi

**G**unmen have reportedly killed 19 people in a renewed attack on communities in Kwande Local Government Area of Benue State.

Locals alleged that the violence began on Saturday, with 16 farmers ambushed and killed along Kashimbila Road while returning to their community in Mbandwa

ward and their bodies were reportedly thrown into a river.

Another assault occurred on Monday afternoon in Boaguwa, Kumakua council ward of Kwande LGA, claiming three more lives, causing many residents to flee to Jato Aka rural town for safety.

A resident of Kwande, who chose to remain anonymous, confirmed the attack, saying that, "The farmers were

returning home when they were ambushed. Their bodies were dumped in the river."

The President General of Mzough U Tiv Worldwide and leader of Benue's three major socio-cultural groups—Mzough U Tiv, Ochi' Idoma, and Om'Ngede—a retired Comptroller of Prisons, Iorbee Ihagh, who hails from the area confirmed the attacks to journalists in Makurdi on Monday night.

Ihagh, speaking from Jato Aka, expressed concern over the deteriorating security situation in Kwande.

He said, "I was informed that 16 farmers were killed at the weekend and their bodies thrown into River Katsina Ala. Just today, three more have been killed in Boaguwa. People have fled their homes, and I doubt if Jato Aka itself is safe."

Ihagh further revealed

that all six council wards in Turan, Kwande LGA, had been overrun by gunmen just as he called on President Bola Ahmed Tinubu to urgently deploy more troops to restore order in the area.

Efforts to obtain an official response from the Benue State government proved difficult at the time of filing this story.

Chairman of Kwande LGA, Terhile Vitalis Neji, could not be reached on telephone despite

repeated trials.

Also, the Special Adviser to the Governor on Internal Security, Joseph Har, referred inquiries to the Director General of Homeland Security, Air Commodore Jacob Gbamwuan (retd.). However, Gbamwuan's phone was unreachable.

Similarly, attempts to reach Benue State Police Command spokesperson, Catherine Anene, were unsuccessful.