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Benue community deserted as militants continue attacks

From Simeon Nwakaudu, Makurdi

ONE week after militants invaded Ankpechi community of Oglewu District of Ohimini Local Council and left eight persons dead, the area has remained deserted by its residents.

At the time of the first attack last Saturday, only 300 persons were displaced in the farming community, but repeated attacks by the mercenaries left the entire village desolate as all residents fled to neighbouring communities for refuge from the militants, who adopted a guerrilla warfare.

Residents of Ankpechi community, especially the settlers, who have remained after the December 2008 crisis, have been the object of the attacks with several of their homes torched by the suspected militants.

The nocturnal attacks in the last one-week have left one person dead, with another elderly man shot in his thigh by the invading armed men, said to have

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been from a neighbouring village in Oglewu district.

When The Guardian visited the area along the Otukpo-Adoka Federal Highway last Friday, it was a ghost town. Household effects were scattered all over the village while some youths were seen harvesting yams under the protection of militiamen.

Two pick-up vans were waiting to transport the yams to Ogobia, where most of the residents had taken refuge.

During The Guardian visit's that lasted for one hour, there was no security presence in the area. The mobile policemen drafted to the area were said to have been withdrawn because of poor funding by the local council.

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