

# 12 feared killed in attacks on Benue, Kaduna communities

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*A building burnt by herdsmen. PHOTOS: LAWRENCE NJOKU*

No fewer than 10 persons have been feared killed and scores injured when suspected herdsmen on Wednesday night attacked some communities in Gwer-West Local Council of Benue State.



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According to sources, the assailants invaded Mbapa, Mbapupuu, Mbachohon and Enger settlements in Agagbe District of the council area in a gorilla warfare fashion at about 11p.m., killing farmers and residents in their sleep.

Survivors Aondoakaa Basil, Torkebbi Yubee and Msughter Anzwa told reporters that people had fled their homes following the invasion.

Basil said they were woken by screaming and gunshots, noting: “We were sleeping when we heard sudden screaming and gunshots. I immediately woke up and grabbed my two children and wife and escaped through the bush.

“We could not carry anything because the attack was sudden. There was confusion everywhere because of the sporadic gunshots by the herdsmen.”

The Guardian observed that the neighbouring villages had been deserted for fear of attacks.

But the State Commissioner of Police, Fatai Owoseni, said the attack was carried out by bandits who attempted to abduct some persons resulting in the death of two.

He added that the highly mobile cattle rustlers, who were chased away from Zamfara, were inflicting pains on the people using the farmers/herdsmen's crisis as smokescreen.

His words: "We have not witnessed any case of attack on Gwer-West communities by herdsmen. What we have was abduction where two persons were killed by some armed bandits.

"From intelligence report we have, some armed marauders with connections and highly visible in cattle rustling and trans-border criminal activities are operating in the state.

"We have been monitoring the group which has a network of informants within the state, among the locals and of course, herders who specialise in rustling.

"Some of them are criminal elements chased from Zamfara and of course, some foreigners."



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