

16 feared dead in fresh Benue attacks

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The Commissioner of Police in Benue, Mr Fatai Owoseni.

- Troops kill 10 B'Haram terrorists, recover N2m in Borno, Yobe
- We've adopted strategies to contain clashes, says CP
- CSOs accuse UN agencies of frustrating IDPs' relocation

Suspected herdsmen in the early hours of yesterday invaded Tse-Adough settlement of Yaav ward, Turan District in Kwande council area of Benue State, killing 10 people and injuring 15 others. The locals told The Guardian that the attackers struck while they were still asleep. One of them said he narrowly escaped being slain, adding: "They invaded our village when almost everybody had gone to bed without premonition of the attack. They came with guns and other dangerous weapons, shooting sporadically to kill and slaughter our people."

He added: "Some of us narrowly escaped before the killers reached our homes but this morning (Sunday) we discovered that some of our brothers and neighbors were killed. We have so far recovered seven corpses and many with dangerous injuries."

The council chairman, Mr. Terdoo Nyor Kenti, who confirmed the incident, regretted that his people were killed without any provocation. He said no fewer than seven corpses had recovered, six injured, adding that one woman was abducted and many houses set ablaze by the herders. Efforts to get further confirmation from the police force were futile as neither the Commissioner of Police, Fatai Owoseni, nor its spokesman, Moses Yamu, took their calls or responded to text calls sent to their mobile phones as at press time.

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George Alli, while confirming the incident, said efforts were in top gear to apprehend the perpetrators. **However, troops of 153 Task Force Battalion, Operation Lafiya Dole and Camerounian defence forces have killed 10 Boko Haram insurgents in a military clearance operations along Wulgo-Ngelkona axis of Borno State.**

The joint military operations, which occurred at the weekend, targeted terrorists on horsebacks to prevent being identified by Nigerian Air Force (NAF) fighter jets in Lake Chad region. The Deputy Director, Public Relations Theatre Command, Operation Lafiya Dole, Col. Onyema Nwachukwu, in a statement yesterday in Maiduguri said the terrorists who were on horsebacks were overpowered by troops in a fierce gun battle.

According to him, the gallant troops killed the insurgents and recovered two AK-47 rifles. The statement also reads: "The terrorists, who were mounted on horsebacks, were overpowered by troops in fierce gun battles, when the gallant troops killed the insurgents and captured two AK-47 rifles from the fleeing mounted insurgents."

Also yesterday, the Benue Commissioner of Police, Mr. Fatai Owoseni, says his command has adopted strategies to contain clashes between farmers and herdsmen in the state. Owoseni, who made the disclosure in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) yesterday in Abuja, noted that the clashes were a major security challenge in the state.



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"The major security challenge in Benue is the herdsmen and farmers clashes and different approaches have been used to check them," he said. He listed the strategies to include dialogue, intelligence policing as well as involvement of communities in activities of the police command.

The CP added that normal techniques of policing and community-based strategies had also been adopted to check the menace. "The security architecture has been put in place after IGP Ibrahim Idris came to the state for an assessment before I was deployed here," he stated.

Owoseni added that the command had followed the strategies all along and utilised available human and material resources. The police chief said the deployment of 15 police mobile units (PMF) to the state was a boost.

He noted that the command's good working relationship with sister security agencies as well as support of the state government helped in containing the challenge. The police chief submitted said that a number arrests had been made and the suspects prosecuted in the court.

"Every security institution that is present in Benue is up and doing, and quite a number of arrests were made. And the police, being the institution through which prosecution is made, the suspects are being arraigned in court. The Army, NSCDC and members of the public do arrest and handover to us. I won't be able to give the exact figure but quite a number of arrests have been made and the suspects have been arraigned in court," he submitted.

On cultism, he said arrests had also been made, adding that the new anti-cultism law had also helped in addressing the issue statewide. Owoseni urged the citizens to keep supporting security agencies in their efforts to better secure lives and property.

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displaced persons (IDPs) back to their homes.

The group alleged that some international agencies had enriched themselves in the name of rendering aid to victims of the Boko Haram attacks in the North East. Its executive director/national coordinator, Maxwell Gowon, who made the accusation in a report after assessment of ongoing military exercise on the Borno axis, yesterday in Abuja, called on the Federal Government and the military authorities to immediately unveil a roadmap for the return and reintegration of the IDPs nationwide.

He called on stakeholders to convoke a forum to audit the roles being played by all organisations with presence in the troubled region. Gowon said: "The decision to focus on these aspects was informed in part by feedback from residents of the affected communities. "Agencies of the United Nations like UNICEF, WHO, IOM and others have not done much to motivate the IDPs to return to their original communities."

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