

# Government imposes curfew as gunmen kill five in Benue

By Joseph Wantu,  
Makurdi

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*[FILE] Benue*

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No fewer than five persons were said to have allegedly been killed between Sunday and yesterday by local militia men in Katsina-Ala Local Council of Benue State.

The Guardian learnt that the gunmen, suspected to be of Shitile extraction, also set houses in Jabi and Abaver communities of Katsina-Ala ablaze, thereby displacing thousands of persons.

Consequent upon these unabated killings, the Benue State Government has imposed a 24-hour curfew on Katsina-Ala town.

A statement, signed by Ede Ogaba Ede, Chief Press Secretary (CPS) to the Acting Governor, Benson Abounu in Makurdi yesterday, said the move was part of measures to restore peace and ensure the security of lives and property in Katsina-Ala.

Ogaba said the curfew, which is with immediate effect, would be reviewed as the situation demands.

He said: “The Benue State Government has imposed a 24 hour curfew on Katsina-Ala with effect from today, Monday, April 22, 2019 as part of efforts to restore peace and ensure the security of lives and property in that part of the state.”

Abounu advised the people of Katsina-Ala to co-operate with security operatives by obeying the curfew.

He warned that anyone found fomenting trouble in the area or in other parts of the state would be apprehended and punished according to law.

Meanwhile, Governor Samuel Ortom of Benue State has cut short his vacation to join hands with major stakeholders to address the ongoing crisis in some border and other communities of the state.

A statement by the Governor’s Chief Press Secretary, Terver Akase, said Ortom is already on the way back to the country to find possible ways of ending the renewed killing of innocent people and destruction of property by gunmen, especially in the Sankera area of the state.

Ortom, who appealed for calm and assured the people of the affected areas that the Benue State Government would do everything lawfully possible to guarantee their safety, stated that it was part of the peace efforts that his deputy, Benson Abounu, recently led a state delegation to Taraba State to meet with key stakeholders in that state where they engaged on the best approach to end the lingering crisis between the people of border communities in the two states.

The governor reiterated that even while on leave, he had been in constant touch with heads of security agencies in the state and is optimistic that sooner than later, peace will return to the troubled areas.

He warned those taking advantage of the crisis to whip up sentiments to desist and remember that Benue is the only state they have and if they allow politics to destroy it, the impact of such destruction will affect everyone irrespective of political affiliation.

Ortom appreciated the Benue State House of Assembly, State Executive and Security Councils, the Benue State Council of Chiefs, leaders and members of religious, civil society and other groups, the media and the entire people of the state for the support given his deputy while he was away on his yearly vacation.

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He, therefore, enjoined people of the state to sustain the support and collaboration with the state government in restoring peace to all parts of the state.

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