

Four feared killed in Benue community attack

By Joseph Wantu,
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Aerial view of Benue

About four persons were killed at Jootar in Ukum Local Government Area of Benue State when Jukun militia allegedly stormed the border town about 4 am yesterday.

The Guardian learned that armed members of the militia group stormed the area when the people were still asleep, shooting and burning down houses in the process.

Eyewitnesses in the area said the suspected Jukun militia came from Wukari in Taraba State fully dressed in military uniforms, carried out the carnage and left unchallenged.

When contacted, Chairman of Ukum Council, Tor-Tyokaa Ibellogo who spoke through his Special Adviser on Media and Strategy, Godwin Iwanan said the attack on Jootar was rather unfortunate as Benue was not at war with Taraba.

“So, the Jukun militia attack on Jootar, an Ukum town in Benue in the early hours of yesterday in which four persons died is reprehensible, condemnable, barbaric and idiotic.

“The Jukun mission over the years has been to expel all indigenous Tiv people from Taraba and the Tiv in Taraba are resisting their expulsion from the state and are fighting for their rights as citizens to remain there because they have no other place to go,” he said.



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Ibellogo explained that the incessant attacks were a localised problem of Taraba that the state government and its people should resolve, saying: “There is, therefore, no justifiable reason for the Jukun to attack Benue.”

He, however, urged Tiv people, especially those in Ukum and Benue to remain calm and not to take law into their own hands, but report to security agencies, even as he enjoined Jukun leaders in Taraba to emulate their Tiv counterparts of Benue and give peace a chance.

Responding, a former councilor at Lumbuv Council argued that Tiv people of Benue have accepted the Jukun as their brothers and are living happily with them at Abintse, Wurukum and other places.

“They have no reason whatsoever to drive the Jukun away from Benue and take their lands, as the Jukun are trying to do in Taraba,” he stated.

But the state Police Public Relations Officer, DSP Sewuese Anene, who confirmed the attack was, however, not certain of the casualty figure, saying police officers have been deployed to the area to keep the peace.



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