

14 feared killed by Fulani Herdsmen in Delta community

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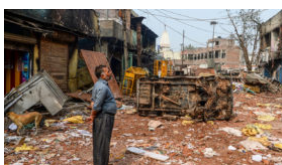
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- **Community Leader Accuses Army Of Complicity**
- **Okowa Condemns Attack, Calls For Calm**

UWHERU community in Ughelli North Local Council, Delta State, is boiling. Soldiers from the Bomadi Army Camp and police units from Ughelli Command have been deployed to the area after the invasion of the community by Fulani herdsmen.

According to leaders of the community, not less than 14 persons are feared dead after the attack. But the police said the number could not be verified as they were yet to see the corpses of those killed.

The Delta State Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), DSP Onome Onovwakpoyeya, when contacted said the Police Area Commander and the DPO of Ughelli division were at Uwheru community investigating the incident and that they were yet to see the bodies of those killed as alleged by the community.

It was learnt that the crisis began on Thursday when herdsmen arrived the community with a large number of cows and destroyed farms. The youths mobilised and warded them off their farms, but the herdsmen regrouped, armed themselves and returned to the community and killed four persons at separate locations.

The Commissioner for Higher Education, Prof. Patrick Muoboghare, who is from the community, and the President General of Uwheru community, Cassidy Akpodefa, told The Guardian that four corpses of those killed had been retrieved while ten others persons are still missing and unaccounted for.

Muoboghare indicted the army and accused them of complicity in the Fulani herdsmen invasion of Uwheru, saying after the herdsmen had finished killing, the soldiers were deployed to the community to protect the herdsmen from reprisal attacks. He said in the last few years the Fulani herdsmen had killed not less than 50 people in the community, adding that the yearly killings were a plot by the Fulani herdsmen to take over their land.

According to him, in the past some Fulani herdsmen had been arrested and handed over to the police but they were promptly freed because the police national command structure is in the hands of Fulani officers.

Akpodefa appealed to the Delta State government to intervene and save the community from the yearly invasion by the Fulani herdsmen, saying that the community, which is known for its production of sweet potatoes, groundnut, pepper and fish can no longer go to their farms due to the menace of herdsmen.

Meanwhile, Delta State Governor, Senator Ifeanyi Okowa in a statement by his Chief Press Secretary, Mr. Olisa Ifeajika, has condemned the attack. The governor however

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called for restraint saying, “I have directed the Commissioner of Police and the Brigade Commander, 63 Brigade, Nigerian Army, Asaba, to as a matter of urgency ensure that peace was restored to the communities.”

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