

Herdsmen Kill 12 In Nasarawa Community, Several Injured

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LAFIA / MAKURDI / ABUJA /
AKURE

Suspected Fulani herdsmen in the early hours of Tuesday killed 12 people while several others sustained various degrees of injuries in a night attack on Kadarko community, a village in Keana Local Government Area of Nasarawa State.

The attack, according to sources, displaced over 3,000 residents of Kadarko.

However, the Nasarawa State Police Command on Tuesday confirmed only the killing of seven persons. According to Kennedy Idirisu, its Public Relations Officer, the victims were killed by gunmen that invaded the village.

Sources told INDEPENDENT that the attack may be a reprisal following the death of 73 cows in a community about a kilometre from Kadarko.

Sources in Kadarko said eight bodies have so far been recovered.

They include the bodies of Augustine Yaager, Ioryem Tete, Saka Leke, Abraham Igba, Wan Sariki Tarboh, Pius Tarboh, Orhiiga Tyough and James Farga.

In a statement signed and made available to INDEPENDENT by Edward Ujege, President-General, Mdzough u Tiv (MUT), he said there is a possibility of the death toll rising as several persons were still missing.

Governor Umaru Al-Makura of Nasarawa condemned the attack on Kadarko community.

Al-Makura, who visited the community on Tuesday with security chiefs in the state, commiserated with families of the victims and the people of the area over the incident.

He said the state government was working to ensure adequate security for the people of the area in the wake of unfortunate

events of the last 48 hours in the community.

"Suspected cattle rustlers killed 73 cows and abducted two herdsmen on Sunday, while seven villagers were murdered on Monday.

"A unit of Mobile Police Force will be deployed to the area in the meantime, with military surveillance to allay the palpable fear and tension in the community.

"The police helicopter will provide aerial surveillance of the area to identify where the attackers were coming from.

"I want to advise those living in isolated settlements to relocate to Kadarko metropolis for their safety," he said.

The governor also appealed to the people of the community to suspend going to the farm pending improved security.

He also called on the people to remain calm and avoid panic relocation from Kadarko town, adding that the mass movement from the community would heighten tension in other communities in the area.

He said that apart from the security beef-up, government would provide relief materials to the displaced persons already taking refuge at Kadarko Primary School.

Most of the rural settlements around Kadarko such as Gaav-Giza, Ngur-Giza, Gidan-Sule and Sarkin-noma have been totally deserted because of the situation.

Also, aged men, women and children are taking refuge in Kadarko Primary School, while others are moving out of the town in large numbers with their luggage.

Edward Ujege, who is also the leader of the socio-cultural organisation in the state, said, "Fulani leaders set the stage for last night's (Monday) attack on Kadarko by claiming the previous day that Tiv militia from Benue State had attacked and killed 73 of their cows. With several other persons still missing,

there is the strong possibility of the figures rising.

"We drew attention to the fact that this report was an obvious mockery of their brutal murder of 73 persons including pregnant women, children and old men who were accorded mass burial on January 11, 2018. We also pointed out the painful, reprehensible, offensive and provocative comparison between cattle and human lives.

"The Mdzough u Tiv wishes to draw the attention of the international community to the on-going genocide against the Tiv people of Benue, Nasarawa and Taraba states with last night's massacre of twelve persons in Kadarko, Nasarawa State. The whole world is aware of the impunity of these attacks which the herdsmen openly boast about, citing the rustling or killing of their cattle."

Ujege lamented that "if the Federal Government or those saddled with the responsibility of protecting lives and property had not granted immunity from arrest and prosecution to these murderous Fulani herdsmen, they would have realised that resort to self-help under any circumstances is not permitted under the law.

"Herein lies the desperation of the Tiv and several other ethnic groups in the Benue valley who have become targets of annihilation by herdsmen with obvious backing by the Federal Government.

"While the killings in Benue continue, thousands of Tiv people have been displaced in Awe, Doma, Keana and Obi local government areas of Nasarawa State.

"Apart from the enormous humanitarian challenges, the attacks of last night have compounded the situation with thousands of people fleeing their homes for fear of further attacks", he lamented.

The MUT President-General was worried that "so far, the Nasarawa State government that has the responsibility to cater

for its citizens in the four local governments (Doma, Keana, Awe and Obi LGAs) mentioned above who are in 15 camps, has been paying lip service to their plight."

He stressed that "Governor Tanko Al-Makura must rise up to perform his constitutional responsibility of taking care of these Nasarawa State citizens. Still the Tiv people in the diaspora and all men and women of goodwill must realise that the Tiv race is under threat of annihilation and they must intervene urgently.

"It would be recalled that the leaders of Miyetti Allah Kautal Hore had declared that the crisis in these states is a struggle for the resources in the Benue valley, and that they will invite Fulani from across the world to annihilate the present inhabitants and take over."

Sultan, Ooni, Others Urge FG To End Killings In Nigeria

Meanwhile, the National Council of Traditional Rulers of Nigeria (NCTR) has urged the Federal Government to end the senseless killings in the country, saying that life is too sacred to be wasted.

The Chairman of NCTR and Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Muhammad Abubakar, made the call at the opening of the council's General Assembly in Port Harcourt on Tuesday.

Abubakar called on the Federal Government to institute a high powered commission of inquiry to investigate the killings across the country.

The theme of the NCTR assembly is 'Community Policing as a Catalyst to Crime Prevention: The Role of Traditional Rulers.'

He urged the Federal Government and law enforcement agents to rise up to the challenge of securing lives and property.

"As we are meeting, if what is happening is failure of governance, we will discuss it in details and come up with an ap-

propriate report to help government and the Nigerian society," he said.

According to him, the traditional rulers are capable of stating things the way they are without sentiment in order to move the nation forward.

"We existed before 1914, so we have seen it all. We are there permanently unlike the political office holders that have tenures.

"We must close ranks as traditional rulers to help build Nigeria".

Also, the Ooni of Ife, Oba Adeyeye Ogunwusi, pleaded with the traditional rulers to put politics aside and work assiduously toward meeting the challenges in the country.

"Some sections of Nigeria are aggrieved and some feel oppressed; let us come together and take up this challenge so that no one will blame us.

"Let us put politics aside, engage in peer review, apply sense of right and wrong, and speak the truth.

"The responsibility lies on our head; we must stop the blame game and stop talking the talk but walk the talk," Ogunwusi said.

Earlier, King Dandeson Jaja, the Amayanabo of Opoobo and Chairman, Local Organising Committee, said that Nigerians were eager to hear from the traditional rulers.

Jaja urged the Federal Government and the royal fathers to rise above ethnicity and sentiments to tackle the challenges in the country.

"The Federal Government should tackle the economic challenges and deteriorating security situation in the country," Jaja said.

The Chairman of Rivers Council of Traditional Rulers decried the practice by which royal fathers depended on government sponsorship to organise their programmes.

He, however, thanked Governor Nyesom Wike for hosting them and assured the traditional rulers that their stay in Rivers would be memorable.

Senate Put Off Security Summit In Honour Of Late Ekwueme

The Senate and Presidency has entered into partnership to convene a National Security Summit so as to end the multi-dimensional security challenges facing the country.

The summit will provide an all-inclusive platform for heads of security and defence agencies, governors, traditional rulers, socio-cultural groups, civil society organisations and others, with a view to finding solutions to acute and long term security challenges in the country.

The event billed to hold on Thursday, February 1 and Monday, February 5, 2018 has been shifted to next week.

The Summit, according to a statement by the chairman of the ad-hoc committee security infrastructure, and Senate Majority Leader, Senator Ahmed Lawan, will also review the challenges being faced by security agencies in the performance of their duties and chart the way forward towards resolving the issues involved.

Among other stakeholders invited to the summit are the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN), All Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN) and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs).

The event was shifted as a mark of honour to the late former Vice President Alex Ekwueme who will be buried on Saturday.

The summit, which was scheduled to hold at the Banquet Hall of the State House was to be declared open by President Muhammadu Buhari.

Afenifere Asks Buhari To Sack Defence Minister

Afenifere has called on President Muhammadu Buhari to remove the Minister of Defence, Mansur Dan-Ali.

The Yoruba socio-political group accused Ali of