

TOR VANDE-ACKA  
MAKURDI

Herdsmen invaded eight communities in Kwande Local Government Area (LGA) of Benue State on Wednesday killing two persons and leaving thousands displaced.

It would be recalled that in the last few weeks, herdsmen have attacked several other communities in Guma and Gwer West LGAs, leading to the displacement of thousands of persons.

Samuel Shior, Executive Secretary, State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), confirmed the attack on the communities in Kwande LGA, while flagging off the distribution of relief materials to IDPs in the state in Makurdi on Thursday.

Daily Independent gathered that some of the affected communities that were invaded included Boagundu, Turan, Maav-Ya, Kendev-Ya, Ityuruv, Ugbe, Iyon, Iwanev, Injooov as well as Jato-aka, the hometown of second Republic Minister of Steel, Wantaregh Paul Unongu.

We further learnt that the in-

## Herdsmen Invade Benue Communities, Kill Two, Displace Thousands

cident which took place about 5pm, on Wednesday, worsened as flock of people, particularly women and children were seen fleeing the area.

Shior explained that "Benue government is aware of that challenge (invasion). What we do is that whenever there is an attack on communities and there are victims and people are displaced, we move immediately

"So we have received report of the attacks in the eight communities in Kwande LGA you are talking about. We have gone there but we will go back again to carry out needs assessment. What we need to do immediately is to provide interim measures that are food and non-food materials as intervention.

"I want to use this opportunity to emphasise that when we load food items in our trucks centrally at SEMA head office from our central warehouse, we take them directly to the camps for onward distribution to the IDPs.

"I need to emphasise this because some people have asked

whether these items get to the camps. Some people feel that when we load food items in trucks, we don't move them at all, it is only a sham."

He added that it was one of the reasons why Governor Samuel Ortom has always insisted on media coverage of SEMA activities.

Furthermore, the SEMA boss decried the continuous attack on Benue communities that have increased the number of displaced persons in the state.

He lamented that the humanitarian crisis caused by the frequent attacks and displacement of persons occasioned by frequent herdsmen attacks were increasing the burden on the state, with government overstretched in terms of logistics of catering for the IDPs.

Efforts to get SP Sewuese Anene, the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Benue State Command, to confirm the incident failed, as she could not be reached for comments.

In another development, seven indigenes of Benue State en

route Lagos last Tuesday were allegedly abducted somewhere along Kabba- Ayere Road, bordering Kogi and Ondo states.

Daily Independent learnt that the passengers who were on board a Benue Links bus were abducted about 3pm.

Among those that were kidnapped are Pastor Steve Orhena and his son, Tertsea, from whom the kidnappers are demanding a sum of N5 million as ransom for their release.

Confirming the incident and the demand by the abductors of her husband and son, Mrs. Hanna Orhena said the kidnappers made contact with her on Wednesday night, demanding the sum of N5 million.

Mrs. Orhena, who spoke with newsmen in Makurdi on phone on Thursday said, "The abductors called me on Wednesday night, between 10pm and 11pm and demanded N5 million but negotiated for N500,000 which they refused and asked me to get someone who could speak Hausa."

She, however, explained

that the kidnappers allowed her to speak with her husband and son, adding that those that abducted her family said they were from Zamfara, but had a boss in Abuja.

Narrating her encounter with the kidnappers, she said, "They told me that they came from Zamfara and have a boss in Abuja. I only negotiated for my family, it was everybody to himself.

"My husband is a Pastor at Jesus Prophetic and Apostolic Church aka Jesus Family located at North Bank in Makurdi," the Benue State capital, the wife stated.

The incident is coming at the heels of an earlier occurrence where six persons on board a Benue Links bus, also traveling to Lagos last week were abducted around Ocha in Anambra State.

**Monarch**

Meanwhile, gunmen suspected to be kidnappers have abducted the traditional ruler

of Bulkpe community in Kwali Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), His Royal Highness (HRH) Alhaji Hassan Shamidozhi.

The gunmen were said to have invaded the palace on Wednesday night, shot randomly to frighten locals, before whisking the monarch away.

Confirming the incident, the monarch's brother, Malam Jibrin D. Gimba, said the gunmen invaded the palace around 9:32pm on Wednesday.

"I just walked into my house after his palace when he said he wanted to take a shower, after which he will come out and rest in front of his palace to take some fresh air.

"Some few minutes later, I started hearing gunshots... I watched through my window and discovered that the kidnappers had whisked him away", said Gimba, who is the Chief Imam of the Central Mosque.

Gimba told newsmen that policemen arrived at the location some moments after the attack.