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3 Killed During Land Settlement Meeting In Taraba

Written by **John Mkom** — 4 days ago News



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Not fewer than three persons have been confirmed killed while others are still missing when armed members of African Nature Investors (ANI) allegedly attacked Fulani and Mambila people in the forest of Gashaka Gumti National Park, Taraba State.

The armed men were alleged to have attacked the people during meeting to resolve a land dispute, on Wednesday.

The Chairman of Gashaka local government area, Hon. Umar Yusuf confirmwd the attack on Thursday at Serti, the headquarters of the local government area when he led a team to evacuate the bodies of the deceased persons from the forest where they were killed for burial.

The Fulani and Mambila people were said to have assembled in the forest to seek a lasting solution to the land crisis when the armed men stormed the meeting, killing the three persons while others ran to escape being killed.

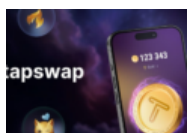
ANI is an African-led not-for-profit organisation founded by members of the private sector and conservationists in Nigeria and Kenya.

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The group partner with communities and governments to protect large-scale wilderness landscapes.

While handing over the bodies of the deceased to their families for burial, Hon. Yusuf vowed to ascertain the cause of the killings, and called on the people to remain calm.

He also appealed to the people to allow his administration make enquiries towards uncovering the accusations against the Park guards in connection with the killings.

Meanwhile, members of the community have linked the killings to illegal mining activities by foreigners in the Gashaka National Gumti Park, stating that the illegal miners have taken over the forest activities by mobilising armed men to kill and scare away people to safeguard their movement.

An elder from Baruwa in Serti town, Mallam Jude Abdul Abubakar who also lost a relative among the three persons alleged that, “There have been massive illegal mining activities by foreigners in the forest.”

He claimed that on weekly basis, a helicopter always land in the forest and always take off with mineral resources been mined by foreigners in the forest.

“The reason they don’t want anybody close to the forest is because of their illegal mining activities. Our hunters have been giving us information about their illegal activities in the forest. The Gashaka Gumti Park is blessed with series of mineral resource, they discovered it and decided to employ the services of ANI and other forest guards to be guiding their activities.

“This time, we are not going to leave any stone unturned; they have been killing our people in the forest without reasons, just to protect their mining activities.

“Let government come in and unravel the causes of the unwanted killings of these innocent people. Governor Agbu Kefas since assumption of office has prohibited illegal mining, why are they killing our people over the activities,” Abubakar queried in Hausa language.

Efforts to speak with ANI in its Jalingo office have been unsuccessful as the building is under locks when our correspondent visited on Thursday and Friday morning.