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## Four killed in Benue village attack

Posted by: Uja Emmanuel, Makurdi in News April 17, 2013 1 Comment

Suspected Fulani herdsmen allegedly killed four Tiv peasant farmers at Imande Jem village, Guma Local Government Area of Benue State, yesterday.

A community leader, Chief Dooga Imande, told The Nation that a housewife, who was fetching water in a stream, sighted some armed Fulani herdsmen at 10am.

She reportedly informed the other residents, who called in soldiers from the 72 Special Forces Battalion, Makurdi, the state capital. The soldiers were said to be on patrol in the area.

Imande Jem is a farming community located on the University of Agriculture, Makurdi (UAM)-Gbajimba Road.

Imande said the military patrol team, with five armed soldiers, requested that some Tiv farmers show them where the herdsmen were sighted.

He said: "Four of our men accompanied the military men from the 72 Special Forces Battalion. But while they were approaching the stream, some armed Fulani herdsmen emerged from the bush and gunned down four famers."

The community leader alleged that the armed soldiers did not respond to the suspected herdsmen's shooting.

He accused the soldiers of taking sides with Fulani herdsmen, especially those of Hausa-Fulani extraction in the area.

Imande called for the immediate withdraw of the soldiers from the area, adding that they could no longer be trusted with the security of life and property.

Addressing reporters after the incident, the lawmaker representing Makurdi North in the Benue State House of Assembly, Avine Agbom (Action Congress of Nigeria, ACN), described the attack as barbaric.

He said a similar scenario started playing out in Jos, the Plateau State capital, adding that it was gradually extending to Benue and the North Central.

Agbom expressed concerns over the alleged connivance of soldiers with Fulani in the killing of Tiv peasant farmers.

The lawmaker urged the Chief of Army Staff to investigate the soldiers from the 72 Special Battalion Forces and the Nigeria Army School of Military Engineering (NASME), both in Makurdi, for their alleged involvement in the bloody Tiv-Fulani crisis.

According to him, the killings have the dexterity of the military, thus suggesting the soldiers' alleged involvement in Tse Iortim, Tse Madugu, Yogbo and 15 other villages in Mbalagh ward, Makurdi Local Government Area, where 30 Tiv farmers were recently killed.

The lawmaker recalled that in the Mbalagh killings, he reported to the NASME Commandant and the Benue State Security Council's meeting that two military vehicles, with registration number NA 725SF 13 and NA725F 12 accompanied Fulani herdsmen during an attack in the area.

Agbom said nothing was done, even though the NASME Commandant confirmed that the vehicles were on patrol.

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