

Herdsmen kill Catholic priest in Enugu

Posted By: Chris Oji, Enugu on: August 26, 2016 In: News No Comments



PIC.5.HERDSMEN AND THEIR COWS ON THE MOVE AT NASARAWA-EGOM ON FRIDAY (10/7/15).
5300/10/7/2015/CH/NAN

Suspected herdsmen yesterday attacked a community in Enugu, killing one person and injuring four others, among them an expectant woman who was reportedly stabbed in the stomach.

Attakwu Akegbe Ugwu community in Nkanu West council area – not far from Enugu metropolis – was attacked at dawn by the herdsmen.

It was the second attack, after the one at Nimbo. Nine people were buried following that attack. A judicial commission of enquiry set up by Governor Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi has just submitted a preliminary report on the attack.

In yesterday's incident, four persons including the husband of the expectant woman, are critically injured, undergoing treatment at the Park Lane Hospital and the Mother of Christ Hospital in Enugu.

A Catholic Church seminarian, Lazarus Nwafor, who on Wednesday completed his apostolic work at the local church, was killed.

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Ugwuanyi and the Catholic bishop of Enugu Diocese, Bishop Callistus Onaga, visited the community.

They were conducted round the scene of the attack by Hon. Afam Okeke, chairman of Nkanu West Local Council.

According to the villagers' account, the herdsmen, believed to be Fulani, invaded a family compound with their cows which destroyed crops and property.

A woman in the compound raised the alarm and chased away the cows by sounding a gong. The cows went in various directions on hearing the sound. They are said to be averse to the sound of a gong.

This reportedly did not go down well with the herdsmen who challenged the woman. They were said to have threatened to retaliate. They raided the compound at about 2am.

They reportedly climbed the ceiling from where they jumped into the rooms, using machetes and daggers to attack the occupants, including the seminarian.

The herdsmen were said to have escaped unhurt and when the community's men stormed their

makeshift camp, they were all gone with their belongings.

Ugwuanyi told members of the Atakwu community that enough was enough on the herdsmen's attacks. He said he would no longer fold his arms while people were being killed.

He said the people would henceforth do everything to defend themselves.

The governor expressed regrets that the attack happened in spite of doing everything to ensure that the Nimbo attack was the last.

In a statement later, Ugwuanyi said: "I received the report of an attack by suspected herdsmen in the Atakwu community during which one person-a seminarian – was killed and four others injured.

"Even though the Police are still conducting investigation into the matter, I hasten to condemn this act in the strongest terms and its entirety for government cannot tolerate the wanton destruction of lives anywhere in Enugu State by anyone or group under any guise whatsoever.

"I have already summoned a meeting with the Fulani community and the security agencies in Enugu State this afternoon to review the situation and determine the appropriate actions to be taken.

"It is indeed unfortunate that this incident is coming just days after the Commission of Inquiry into the killings at Nimbo submitted an interim report and is about to conclude its assignment.

"I wish on behalf of the State Government, to express my sympathies to the family of the deceased, I assure them that Government will do everything necessary to ensure that the culprits are apprehended and brought to book while we take care of the medical bills of the injured persons.

"I want to reassure all citizens of the State of the unwavering commitment of Government to ensuring the security in every corner of the state. We will continue to take necessary and adequate measures to protect the lives and property of our people and ensure that anyone or group of people found to be engaging in acts that threaten peace and security in the state, will be made to face the full wrath of the law."

Enugu State Police Commissioner Emmanuel Ojukwu sympathised with family of the victims and the community.

A statement by police spokesman Ebere Amaraizu said: "Security made up of personnel of riot policemen, Counter Terrorism Unit as well as operatives of the Homicide Section of the State Criminal and Investigation Department, Enugu have been deployed to the area to ward off any breakdown of law and order."

Deputy Senate President Ike Ekweremadu condemned the attack.

In a statement by his Special Adviser (Media), Mr. Uche Anichukwu, Ekweremadu said: "This is another heartbreak, not only for Enugu State, but the nation in general; and whatever evil forces behind these reprehensible acts certainly do not wish the country well.

"It must not be condoned; the primary objective of government is the welfare and security of the citizens."

"The Federal Government must take decisive steps to put a full stop to this wanton destruction of lives and property; and the security agencies must do everything humanly possible to ensure that the perpetrators of this act of wickedness in Akagbe-Ugwu do not go unpunished."

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