

15 killed as herdsmen attack Benue community

• Army: we are yet to ascertain the casualties

SUSPECTED herdsmen yesterday killed 16 persons at Ebete community in Usha Ward of Agatu Local Government Area of Benue State.

Two others were injured.

The Nation gathered that the suspected herdsmen stormed the area at 1 am when the residents were fast asleep.

They reportedly stormed the settlements and opened fire on houses as the people attempted to escape.

In the ensued melee, the assailants were said to have shot at the fleeing residents.

Sixteen residents were confirmed dead while two others sustained injuries and were reportedly receiving treatment at the general hospital in Obagaji, headquarters of Agatu Local Government Area.

From Uja Emmanuel,
Makurdi

An eyewitness, Daddy Seni, told our correspondent in Makurdi, the state capital, that his father was killed alongside his siblings.

The Acting Chairman of the local government, Alhaji Oyigocho, also confirmed the incident.

The council chairman said he had visited Ebete community with some council members in company of security agencies.

Also, the Force Commander, Operation Whirl Stroke Maj.-Gen. Adeyemi Yekini said armed bandits invaded the area.

He said the command had not ascertained the number of casualties.

Yekini said: "I received a

report this afternoon (yesterday) that some people were killed in Agatu by suspected armed bandits. I'm not sure of the number of casualty yet, but I don't think it's up to 16.

"We have sent a patrol team to the general area where the incident happened. Although it is in Benue, but it can better be accessed through Loko in Nasarawa State."

Benue State Governor Samuel Ortom described the incident as unfortunate and condemnable.

The governor urged security agencies to forestall further attacks on innocent residents of the state.

Ortom, who spoke through his Chief Press Secretary, Terver Akase, said the

state cannot afford to have another round of killings, like what happened last year.

"Yes, I can confirm that the governor of Benue State met earlier today with the Commissioner of Police, Mr. Bishi, and he confirmed that there was an attack in Ebete in Agatu earlier today in which 17 persons were killed by suspected armed herdsmen.

"We feel that this is unfortunate because the governor has raised the alarm that some persons, for political reasons, were planning to unleash armed herdsmen on innocent Benue people to cause fear in the people for political gains," he said.

Court of Appeal filed