

Women protest killing of five in Benue, block Makurdi-Lafia highway

■ Uja EMMANUEL, Makurdi ■

NO fewer than five persons have been reportedly killed in Ortese settlement, Guma Local Government Area, by suspected Fulani herdsmen on Friday night in Benue State.

Angered by the continued attacks and killings of innocent farmers, women within the locality took over the busy Makurdi-Lafia highway to stage a peaceful protest.

Waving green leaves, the women, with children on their backs, sang mournful songs and occupied the highway for hours.

They called on the federal government, which is in charge of security to protect their lives and property, so that they can go back to their farmlands.

A member of the community, Peter Najime, who spoke to The Nation, said the armed men stormed Ortese village at

about 2am on Friday.

"They shot sporadically into the air to scare away the people who were fast asleep.

In the melee that ensued, people ran in all directions, some of them gunned down in the process. Women and children also sustained various degrees of injuries and were taken to nearby hospitals.

As at press time, there was still traffic gridlock on the road, as the distraught women refused to leave the highway.

Guma and Logo local government areas have come under bloody attacks from suspected herdsmen for more than 15 years.

This has led to a huge humanitarian crisis, resulting in over two million internally displaced persons (IDPs) spread in ten camps across the state.

Police spokesperson, DSP Kate Anene, as at the time of filing in this report, was yet to confirm the incident.