

Gunmen kill four police officers, two others in Ebonyi

①

It was a bloody day in Ebonyi and Benue States yesterday after gunmen shot four police officers and two women dead while suspected herdsmen killed 16 people and set several houses on fire.

②

The four police personnel were killed at a checkpoint in Abakaliki, capital of Ebonyi State and the women were apparently hit by stray bullets on the Nwoke-Hilltop Road in the state capital.

③

The herdsmen attack took place at Wandor, Mbaikyor, Mbalom council Ward of Gwer-East Local Government Area in Benue State 24 hours after a similar attack in Ukum Local Government Area of the state.

No fewer than 30 people were killed in that incident.

The Ebonyi attacks occurred at about 5am yesterday.

The incident happened at a checkpoint close to a filling station near Ebyia bridge on Hilltop/ Nwoke road.

The road is a major entrance

16 killed by suspected herdsmen in Benue

Ogochukwu **ANIOKE**, Abakaliki/
Uja **EMMANUEL**, Makurdi

into the city and also leads to Governor Francis Nwifuru's country home.

Police spokesperson, Joshua Ukandu, confirmed the incident in a statement, saying: "Today at about 05:00am, operatives of the Command who were posted to duty at Hilltop stop and search/pin-down point along Nwoke Road, on the outskirts of Abakaliki, were attacked by armed hoodlums."

Mr Ukandu claimed the attackers were suspected to be members of the Eastern Security Network (ESN), the militia arm of the secessionist group, Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB). But this claim could not be independently verified.

He said the gunmen shot

sporadically at the operatives who engaged the hoodlums in a fierce gun duel.

"In the ensuing gun battle, the hoodlums scampered and abandoned a pump action rifle which was recovered.

However, four) of the operatives paid the supreme price, while two civilians were caught in the crossfire and killed," he added.

The spokesperson noted that the Commissioner of Police in the state, Augustina Ogbodo, swiftly dispatched tactical teams to track down the fleeing hoodlums.

16 killed in suspected herdsmen attack on Benue community

It was gathered that the suspected herdsmen stormed Mbalom at about 10pm on Thursday when people were settling down in their various houses in the settlements.

The invaders, according to an eyewitness Ujam Amase immediately opened fire and also set fire on houses.

Property worth millions of naira including food stuff destroyed.

"They killed children and women. After shooting them (victims), they used machetes to cut their bodies into pieces like meat," said Amase who escaped from the scene of the attack.

The names of the 16 corpses recovered are Peter Tion, Nyityo Kyoon, Iorfa Ukombor, Doopinen Awua, Tyoshaa Mkaanem and Asan Ate.

Others are Asough Ate, Terzungwe Asoo Ate, MWO Mbatsavbun Gbatar (rtd), John Ndahagh Tyohemba, Tertsea Ukombor, Akuma Kpenge, Abume Kpenge, Igba Byuan, Master Ter Byuan, Terzungwe Aulugh and a young boy whose name was not

immediately known.

Survivors fled the village.

The Benue Police Command said it had deployed personnel to the area.

Rep Achado condemns attack

Member of the House of Representatives from Gwer East/Gwer West Federal Constituency, Dr Asema Achado condemned the attack, describing it as unprovoked, barbaric and unacceptable!

He sympathised with the families of the victims and said the attack was one too many, citing similar incidents in Sankera, Kwande and Agatu, with over 100 people recently murdered by suspected herdsmen.

He expressed worries that aside the spate of killings in Benue State, rising cases of kidnapping and displacement of people were already destroying economic activities, a development he fears can lead to widespread hunger and