

Suspected herdsmen kill five in Benue community



•Troops rescue 8 kidnapped passengers

Suspected herdsmen on Friday, shot and killed five persons at Tse tsu Bridge on Makurdi-Naka-Federal highway, a distance of 12km before Naka town, headquarters of Gwer West Local Government Area, in **Benue state**.

Narrating how the unfortunate incident happened, Mr.Teryila Atukpu, told The Nation that at about 4.30-5pm,

suspected herdsmen came out of the bush and shot at commuters who were mostly on motorcycles.

Mr. Atukpu said: “The attack, as usual, was conducted in a jiffy by the killer herders, who fled into the bush after committing the heinous act.

According Atukpu, “For long, this Gestapo approach has been the approach of the killer herders, especially in Gwer West Local Government Area of Benue State.

He said one of the victims of the attack, Targule Terkula, died on the spot while two others died in a private clinic in Naka.

Four others sustained various degrees of injuries and are still receiving medical treatment in the same private hospital at Naka.

Naka headquarters of Gwer West Local Government Area has been under sustained attack of herders, who have occupied 9 out of 15 Local Government Areas, for 15 years ago, since the attack began.

Meanwhile the Forum of Tyoshin Academics (FoTA), has condemned the Friday attacks and killing in Gwer West Local Government Area and called on the security agencies to fish out the perpetrators and bring them to face the law.

In a statement signed by Professor Patrick Ukase and Professor John Ajai for National President and National Secretary respectively, the group stated that “since 2011, the toll of this violence has been staggering.

“Between 2011 and 2017, 192 sons and daughters of Tyoshin were gruesomely murdered by herders.

“From 2018 to 2023, the numbers escalated, with 302 more lives lost in the area.

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“This year alone, 17 individuals have been mercilessly hacked down by these herders. These figures do not include those who have disappeared and have not been seen since 2011.

“In all, we have lost over 511 lives to this relentless onslaught.

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The Forum of Tyoshin Academics called on the state and Federal Government as well as security agencies to save Gwer West people from external aggression occasioned by herdsmen attacks and killings.

At press time, Benue State Police Command said they were waiting for the report from the Police Divisional Office from Naka, Gwer West Local Government area .

Meanwhile, troops of Operation Whirl Stroke (OPWS), a military operation from the 401 Special Forces Brigade/Sector 1 in Makurdi have rescued 8 kidnap passengers in Benue community.

The rescue operation took place at Akaa – Akundo settlement, along Zaki – Biam / Wukari road in Ukum local government area of Benue State, on Wednesday 17th October, 2024 at 7:30 pm.

The names of the rescued victims are; Mr. Oliver Enze, a 40 years old driver; Mr. Obi Valentine, 32 years old, Nasuru Abubarka, 18 years old; Evangelist John Udhemuburu, 64 years; Bulus Bukar, 23 years; Samuel Chukwudi, 18 years; Joseph Ejeh, 37 years and Alex Okafor, 42 years respectively.

The driver, Oliver Enze, who drove the Taraba Express International Transport Company bus, narrated the ugly incident to The Nation at the headquarters of the Operation Whirl Stroke in Makurdi. He disclosed that he was conveying 10 passengers from Onitsha to Taraba State at about 7:30pm when they arrived Akaa – Akundo settlement between Zaki -Biam to Kyado, in Ukum local government area.

“Along Wukari road, a check point was mounted by some armed men wearing army uniforms and we mistook them to be soldiers.

“Several other vehicles were also parked by the roadside, and I was asked to park and ordered down with the passengers and forced to lie face down .

“Two of the passengers were taken away from the vehicle by the gunmen into the bush, and cash worth millions of naira was collected from them, including traveling bags, phones and other valuables.

The driver said in the process of their operations, they spotted the coming of the Joint Military Operations Team vehicle and took to their heels.

Some of the victims who spoke to The Nation commended the military for their prompt intervention.

They called for establishment of permanent military barracks around the Zakibiam – Wukari road, which shares boundary between Taraba and Benue States, as part of permanent solution to insecurity in the axis .

When contacted, Brigadier General A. Rabi, Commander 401 Special Forces Brigade/Sector 1 OPWS, confirmed the incident and assured Benue resident of total fight against criminality in the State.