

Suspected herdsmen kill six in Benue community



• Torch police station, render hundreds homeless

Suspected herdsmen have launched fresh blistering attacks on Ayilamo settlement killing six persons in the process.

Ayilamo is the headquarters of Tombo Ward, Gaambietiev ,Logo Local Government Area of Benue State.

The attacks took place on Friday and yesterday in the farming community located on Abinsi- Anyiin – Wukari federal highway.

Wukari in Taraba State shares boundary with Benue State and there has often been communal strife between the neighbouring communities.

An eyewitness, Terwase Avande told *The Nation* that suspected armed herdsmen with herds of cattle stormed Ayilamo , Tombo Ward ,at about 6 pm from the direction of Akwana Road and started shooting at houses and setting them ablaze.

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” The herdsmen came alongside their cattle, well-armed, as they shot at houses , while the cattle advanced into the main Ayilamo town”

Avande stated that but for the timely intervention of members of Operation Whirl Stroke , a military troop ,who repealed the attackers, Ayilamo would have been overrun.

He said three persons were shot and killed in the Friday attack.

Again on Saturday ,the herdsmen returned at about 2pm, despite the presence of military personnel and opened fire at Ayilamo Police Station, located on Uzer – Makurdi road .

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“The armed herdsmen supported by a militia from a neighbouring state, shot at Ayilamo Police Station, forcing the policemen on duty to flee. They went into the police station and smashed the window glasses and scattered some documents. Three persons were killed in the Friday attacks, “said Avande.

A community leader ,Chief Paul Adetsav told The Nation that ” attempt to overrun the community is as a result of some mineral resources which were said to have been found in the area .

Adetsav said “so many mineral resources have been found in Tombo land , and illegal mining activities have been going on until Benue State put a stop to it.

“Since then, the intensity of the attacks has increased. The invaders keep threatening us with bloody violence on a daily basis , killing and maiming our people and setting our houses ablaze.

” We no longer go to our farms. The few planted crops have been destroyed by the armed herdsmen using cows who go into the farms and match over them .Hunger is killing us and our children have nothing to eat for years.

“The government who has oversight over security is doing nothing to save us. Gradually, the invaders who are well armed are closing up on Ayilamo with a population of over 400,000 people.”

At press time, residents of the area were seen fleeing the farming community in their numbers. Mothers with children on their backs were seen trekking long distances to safe places.

The Logo Divisional Police office in Ugba confirmed the attacks and killings.

The Chairman of Logo Local Government Council, Hon.Clement Ukav, confirmed the incident and assured that he was doing everything possible to arrest the situation.

