

Council boss raises alarm over killings in Edo LGA



The Chairman of Etsako East Local Government Council of **Edo State**, Princess Benedicta Attoh, yesterday raised the alarm, over what she described as the spectre of killing in the council.

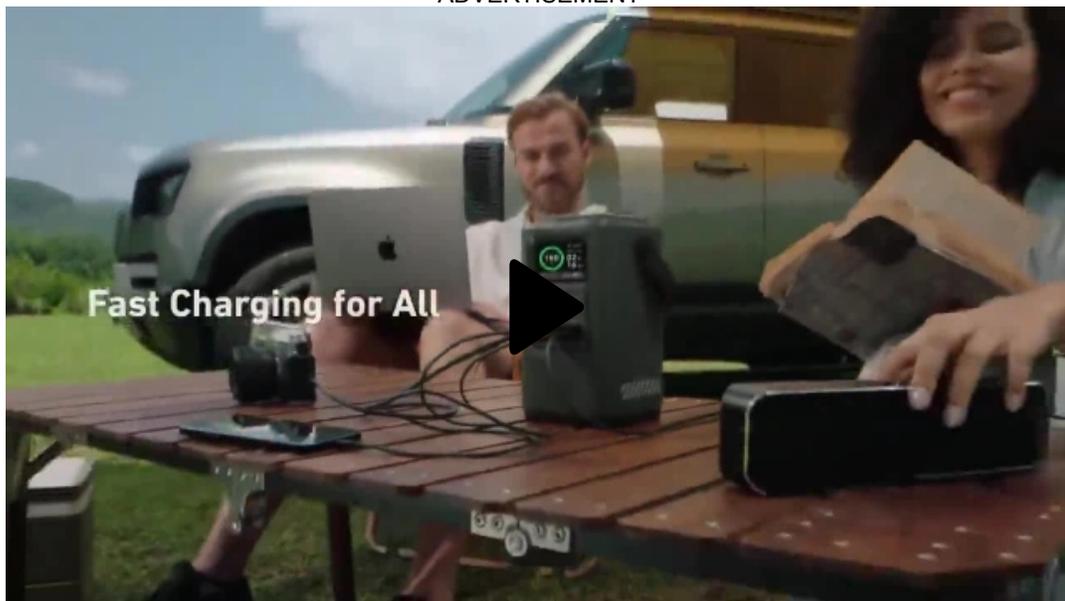
She accused herdsmen and militias for being behind the killings and kidnappings in the LGA, on a daily basis.

Attoh, while speaking with reporters, revealed that on Tuesday this week, no fewer than three persons were slaughtered during a rampage in Okpekpe, while seven people were matcheted at Itsukwi in the same LGA.

She disclosed that the victims were killed on their farmlands, while other residents managed to escape from the fully-armed attackers.

Etsako East LG chairman said: “My people are being massacred like goats. Everyday, you would hear that four or five persons were killed. We cannot have the exact number of the people that have been killed so far, because some of the bodies are still in the bush, and yet to be discovered.

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“No axis is safe in our LGA, as the attacks take place along the roads and in the farms. Similar things happened at Agenebode, which forced the community’s youths to retaliate, and led to the burning of the police station, killings and destruction of valuable property a few weeks ago.

“The youths of Etsako East LGA should now be allowed to defend their lands. We have been calming them down, in order to forestall another fierce battle, but higher authorities must be seen to be leading from the front.”

Attoh also stated that it was time to tackle the high-level insecurity in the LGA by the Federal Government approving the deployment of military personnel in parts of the bush and farmlands, so as to give the farmers a sense of safety in their farmlands.

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She urged the Bola Tinubu’s administration to ensure the security of lives and property of residents of Etsako East LGA, which, according to her, was currently on fire.

The LG boss said: “Killings and kidnappings take place daily in Etsako East LGA. Our youths are willing to defend themselves, their families and their lands. Their patience has run out. So, the Federal Government should be ready to accept the outcome of their actions, should it fail to provide protection.

“The peace-loving residents will not fold their arms and watch their family members being killed in a gruesome manner on their farmlands. Is going to the farm now a death sentence in Nigeria? The killings and kidnappings have become the criminals’ way of life, without appropriate action being taken against the herdsmen.

“I wish to also call on members of the National Assembly to legalise self defence for residents of every community, and be enshrined in Nigeria’s Constitution. Shall we continue to wait for government, when we die daily?”

The traditional ruler of Okpekpe in North Iyie Zone in Etsako East LGA, Peter Osigbemeh, while also speaking, called on Edo state and federal governments to establish forest rangers, in order to guard the forests, by empowering the local vigilance members and hunters with necessary security gadgets, to enable them to take charge of their forests and defend themselves.

The monarch said: “The current madness in Etsako East LGA has gone beyond the mere establishment of security agencies and networks. Security personnel should be deployed in the forests, because our problems are in the forests, not in the communities. The police cannot manage this.

“We need forest rangers that will permanently be based in the forests, in order to enable the residents of Etsako East LGA to go to their farms.

“We can also guard ourselves. Just give us arms and compensate the volunteers, who will be in the forests. The insecurity in Etsako East LGA would have been resolved, if it was handled in collaboration with the locals.”