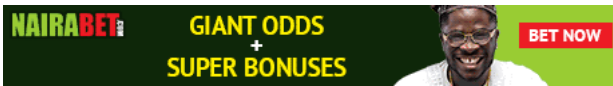


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## Herdsman kill 2, injure many in Ekiti (/herdsmen-kill-2-injure-many-in-ekiti)

May 22, 2016

•Tension as farmers abandon farms for fear of further attack

**Written by:** Sam Nwaoko-Ado Ekiti

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Oke Ako community in Ikole Local Government Area of Ekiti State was on Friday night invaded by herdsmen with sources saying two people were killed in the incident.

Sources in the community claimed that the attack began before the community guards commenced their usual patrols at 8.00p.m., with the source saying that the attack had been in the offing.

A community member, who didn't want to be named, said "four days ago, the herdsmen had an altercation with some of the hunters in Oke Ako after several warnings against the herdsmen's continued destruction of maize farms.

"The community had been having a running battle with the Fulanis because their maize in their communal farms were being fed to their cattle. They had resorted to physical guarding of the farms until the Fulanis warned that they would attack them. The villagers then set traps in the farms, which caught about seven of their cows and that was the incident that ignited the trouble."

A leader in the community and a former speaker of the Ekiti State House of Assembly, Mr Dele Olugbemi, said "from what we gathered, there were 14 of them and seven of them had AK-47 rifles while about four of them carried guns, apart from machetes and their usual bows and arrows.

"The community guards said they were caught unawares because the attackers invaded the community before they could start their normal routine and this was the cause of the level of damage to the town."

Olugbemi alleged that the attack was "premeditated because we found that all the Fulani settlements in Ipao, Oke Ako, Irele, Iyemero, Itapaji which are all in the same area as Oke Ako had been evacuated along with their cattle and the settlers are nowhere to be found."

He said the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) in Ikole and his men had moved into the area after they were contacted and added that they all kept vigil in the community to forestall further attacks.

The DPO, who confirmed the incident in a telephone interview, however explained that he could not ascertain whether the incident was an armed robbery or Fulani herdsmen attack.

Some other members of Oke Ako, however, lamented what they claimed was “the poor and ineffective response of the police when they were informed of the attack,” and claimed that the police failed to act swiftly when the case was reported to them during the attack.

They alleged that “it is one of our community members that we contacted that mobilised them and had to buy N8,000 worth of petrol in each of their patrol vehicles before they could come.”

Also, Mrs Grace Olofin, another member of the community alleged that the herdsmen had shot sporadically and killed one Lekan Arosanyin, while four others sustained various degrees of injuries and were said to be receiving treatment at a private hospital in Ado Ekiti, the state capital.

Another witness, Adebayo Ajayi, who said he escaped from the community, described the incident as a reprisal attack, saying that the villagers had been resisting the use of their farmlands as grazing fields by the herdsmen.

One of the residents, Muiyiwa Olukosi, whose wife sustained machete wound, told newsmen that the case was reported to police in the area, alleging that there was no response from them.

According to him, the police demanded for N12,000 before they could move to the scene as he said police complained of no fuel in their Hilux van.

Olukosi who maintained that things would have gone worst if not for the prompt response of a team of the Nigerian Army from Akure, even before the arrival of police in the area also noted that the attack would have been prevented had the police acted swiftly during the attack.

He called on the governments at all levels to beef up security in the area in order to avert the re-occurrence of such development.

Efforts to reach the Public Relations Officer of the Ekiti State Police command failed and he didn't respond to a text message sent to his mobile phone.

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