

Bandits kill 30 in two Katsina villages

•Herdsmen in army uniform kill 10 in Delta communities

Muhammad Sabiu and Ebenezer Adurokiya

SUSPECTED bandits on Friday evening killed no fewer than 30 people in Tsauwa and Dankar villages in Batsari Local Government Area of Katsina State.

Eyewitness said the bandits also burnt down houses, animals, and food-stuffs.

It was gathered that at Tsauwa where 21 people were said to have been killed, efforts were still being made on Saturday evening to bury some of the deceased.

The District Head of Batsari, who is also Sarki Ruma, Alhaji Tukur Muaazu, described the incident as horrible.

"I have never seen this type of destruction in my life. The bandits arrived here (Tsauwa) about 7.00 p.m on Friday when residents were about observing Magrib. Some were also

preparing to sleep. The bandits laid siege to the village, killing and destroying anything they sighted.

"I appeal to Governor Aminu Masari to come to the aid of the victims. I will also plead that security in the community should be strengthened."

The Katsina State Police Commissioner, Sanusi Buba, was also at the two communities for an on-the-spot assessment on Saturday.

He confirmed that thirty people were killed by the bandits.

"I still find it surprising that whatever could have been the motive, these people could still carry out these dastardly acts. We are, however, after them."

"Twenty-one people were killed in Tsauwa while nine were killed in Dankar."

As of the time of filing this report security personnel including police and the army as well as local vigilantes had taken up positions

in the two villages.

In a related development, no fewer than 10 persons mostly farmers have been killed by suspected herdsmen dressed in army uniform in Delta State.

The killing took place at Awwon, Agadama, Ohoror and other communities of Uwheru Kingdom in Ughelli North Local Government Area of Delta State.

Sunday Tribune gathered that the herdsmen attacked the communities repeatedly between Thursday and Friday, killing the victims in different parts of the communities.

It was gathered on Saturday afternoon that no fewer than 10 corpses were recovered by members of the communities and some military personnel who visited the communities.

Friday's attack on the agrarian communities by the suspected herdsmen were allegedly led by gunmen in military garbs.

Although Governor Ifeanyi Okowa is said to have directed the commissioner of police to arrest the situation from degenerating, some government officials claimed that there were more casualty than made public.

They said several members of the communities were still being searched for by security agencies and members of the community.

"Two nights ago including last night Fulani herdsmen killed some people as usual in their farmlands.

"The attacks usually happened in the farms and as we speak, our people cannot go to their farms because the herdsmen have taken over almost all the communities. The communities are comfortably under their control.

"Many of the victims are still in the bushes and other parts of the communities. About 10 of them have been recovered while others

are still missing. Usually, when they kill, they wait for those that will come for the dead bodies and also kill them," a source said.

Many members of the attacked communities were said to have fled in neighbouring communities of Ughelli, Ewreni and other places.

The state governor, Dr. Okowa, who condemned the killing, has urged the people of the area to remain calm.

Okowa, who confirmed the attack through his Chief Press Secretary, Mr Olisa Ifeajika, said at least eight persons were killed.

"According to reports from the communities, herdsmen accompanied by unidentified army personnel stormed the communities in an unprovoked attack that has become an annual routine, killed no fewer than eight persons and injured many others.

"The reports revealed that

the crisis started on Thursday and that as of Saturday, lives and property, including farms, had been lost", Okowa's aide said in the statement.

He called for restraint, saying that he had directed the Commissioner of Police and the Brigade Commander, 63 Brigade, Nigerian Army, Asaba, to urgently ensure that peace was restored to the communities.

The governor charged the Nigerian Army to investigate the alleged involvement of its personnel in the crisis and fish out the perpetrators in the inprovoked killings.

"The unwarranted attacks and killing of innocent locals in Awwon, Agadama and Ohoror communities of Uwheru kingdom in Ughelli North Local Government Area and the wickedness of suspected criminal herdsmen alleged to be aided and abetted by unidentified military personnel are mindless.