

Herdsmen kill seven mourners, cultists three others in Benue

Johnson Babajide | Makurdi

THREE corpses were found dumped close to the main gate of the Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi (FUAM) in the early hours of Friday, just as no fewer than seven people were killed and several others injured in a fresh attack on Guma communities Benue State, also on Friday. The attack lasted till the early hours of Saturday.

Sunday Tribune learned that the deceased in Makurdi might have been victims of cult clashes and that they were chased to the area by suspected cultists who were on a reprisal mission.

The assailants, after hacking the three victims to death, also set their corpses ablaze.

A source, who did not want to be mentioned, explained that the killing may

not be unconnected to the Thursday cult killing of a final year student of Political Science at the Benue State University (BSU).

The source said those who came and attacked at the FUAM may be members of the same cult with the deceased BSU student and had come to FUAM to avenge the death of their member.

When contacted, FUAM's Public Relations Officer (PRO), Dr. Joseph Fanafa, who confirmed the report, however noted that those who were killed were not students of the institution as none of their student was missing at the time of this report.

Confirming the report, Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO); DSP Catherine Anene, said suspected armed robbers were lynched in the area and that two locally made pistols were recovered at the scene.

Also in Benue State, no fewer than seven people were killed and several others injured in a fresh attack on Guma communities on Friday night.

Sources from the area said that suspected Fulani herdsmen invaded Chongu community in Mbawa council ward, where people had gathered for a wake-keep around 11 p.m.

Herdsmen were said to have moved into Tse Ayev and Tyohembe in Mbanyiar where they attacked, maimed and killed many people.

Confirming the incident to **Sunday Tribune** on phone in Makurdi, the head of Mbagwa in Mbawa council, Zaki Emmanuel Usuah, said that the herdsmen stormed the communities around 11pm and started shooting sporadically till the early hours of today (Saturday).

"We were at a wake-keep of one of our late el-

ders who was to be buried today (Saturday) at Chongu, when we suddenly started hearing gunshots.

"At Tyohembe, they killed Chikwa and Taza Abuur. They went to Tse Ayev where they killed one Tarnum Yanum, while the bodies of four others were burnt beyond recognition. If they ran into women, they would collect their handsets and money. The entire communities had been deserted and so many people had fled the areas to Daudu," he said.

When contacted, the Police Public Relations Officer in the State, DSP, Catherine Anene, confirmed the attack, saying that two were killed and that others were hospitalised.

Meanwhile, the Chief Press Secretary to governor, Samuel Ortom, Terver Akase, confirmed the attack, adding that three persons were killed by the

herdsmen.

The Chief Press Secretary was reacting to the statement credited to one time leader of Miyetti Allah in the state, Garus Gololo.

Gololo had raised the alarm that more than 2,000 cows belonging to herdsmen were impounded by Livestock Guards, and that many of the cows were slaughtered in the quarantine unit.

Part of the statement read, "This is a tactic to divert attention from the heinous crime committed by the herdsmen. Last night, (Friday night) armed herdsmen attacked Tarhembe village of Mbawa in Guma Local Government Area, killing three persons and leaving many others injured. Perhaps Gololo was privy to the attack, that's why he spoke to the press a few hours to the killings.

"Governor Samuel Ortom will never join issues with

that man despite his stant verbal attacks on person and office of Governor.

Recall that Miyetti Cattle Breeders Association, MACBAN and Miyetti Allah Kautal Hore all disowned Gololo, so he possibly can't be speaking for those groups. He obviously represents himself.

"Sometimes he calls himself an APC chieftain and other times spokesman for Fulani herdsmen. The man is a crisis entrepreneur, one of those who do not want an end to the killing of innocent people in and other parts of the state so he can continue to market his 'wares'.

"His claim that over 2,000 cows have been impounded by Livestock Guards, some are being killed in the quarantine unit, is a ploy to stir hatred."

No going back on construction of regional road —Sanwo-Olu