

11 killed in Benue attacks

Johnson Babajide | Makurdi

ELEVEN persons have been killed in separate attacks on communities in Guma and Kwande local government areas of Benue State

Seven other persons were left injured and several others declared missing after the attacks that occurred on Thursday.

It was gathered that while the attacks in Guma Local Government Area claimed eight lives, including those of three herdsmen, the attacks in Kwande Local Government Area left three persons dead and several others injured. Seven persons were said to be unaccounted for in the council area after the violence.

Chairman of Guma Local Government Area, Anthony Shawon, confirmed the attacks in the area, noting that five persons were killed by suspected herdsmen in Uhue village.

"Five people were killed in Uhue. There was also an attack on Torkula village which caused soldiers to call for reinforcement," Shawon said.

He accused Fulani herdsmen of commencing the hostilities.

He said: "Fulani herdsmen were the ones who first killed people in the village and the village youths retaliated by killing two of them."

Chairman of Kwande Local Government Area, Tersua Yakwan, who also confirmed two attacks in his domain, said three herdsmen were burnt after they strayed into farmlands in Kwande.

He said in the attack, seven

people got missing, adding that hired militias suspected to be herdsmen from Uban-iko in Cross River State also invaded parts of the local government where they inflicted grave injuries on no fewer than 12 people.

"There were two incidents, one at Benue/Taraba border wherein some herdsmen strayed into farms and caused destructions to the farms in the process.

"It is true that three herdsmen were burnt and seven persons from our community have gone missing.

"In the second incident, some mercenaries came to attack our people because of land. As I am talking to you, 12 people are being treated for serious injuries in a hospital in Makurdi.

"The mercenaries were heavily armed. When police realised that they were outnumbered, they called in soldiers who assisted them to bring the situation under control," Yakwan said.

Secretary of Miyeiti Ala in Benue State, Ibrahim Galama, alleged that some people from the state moved into Nasarawa State, killed three herdsmen and took away their motorcycles.

"I got a report that some people from Benue State crossed over to Nasarawa State, killed three herdsmen and took away their bikes," Galama said.

When contacted, the Benue State Police Public Relations Officer, DSP Catherine Anene, said she was only aware of the crisis in Kwande where people were injured.