

Fulani Herdsmen Murder 56 In Fresh Killings

•42 in Benue, 14 in Taraba

By Johnson Babajide | Ma... On May 29, 2021

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FILE PHOTO

NO fewer than 56 people were murdered in separate attacks by suspected Fulani herdsmen in several local government areas of Benue and Taraba states between Thursday and Friday.

In Benue State, 42 persons were reportedly killed in attacks by the assailants in two local government areas, while 14 others were killed on Thursday in Gassol and Bali local government areas of Taraba State.

The affected local governments in Benue State, according to locals, are Katsina Ala and Gwer West. Residents of Shikaan, Mbagena and Kpav in Shitile, the affected communities in Katsina Ala Local Government Area, said that the attackers invaded their communities in the early hours of Thursday and embarked on a killing spree.

The locals noted that by the time the dust settled, about 36 dead bodies were evacuated. Also in Gwer West Local Government Area of the state, six people were reportedly killed while some travellers were kidnapped on Naka-Makurdi Road on Friday. Confirming the incidents, the chairperson of the council area, Mrs Grace Igbabon, said some suspected Fulani herdsmen attacked a community close to Makurdi and killed five people while some people were also abducted.

Igbabon said: "Some suspected Fulanis invaded Tinader, on the way to Makurdi, and attacked villagers and travellers.

"We were holding a stakeholders meeting yesterday between 4.00 p.m. and 5.00 p.m. when people from Tinader village called me and reported that there was an attack on their village. They said five people were killed.

“I later gathered that the suspected Fulanis waylaid passengers on the NakaMakurdi Highway and kidnapped some people, including a woman and her child. Their whereabouts are still unknown.”

The chairperson said there was also an exchange of gunfire between some Fulani herdsmen and residents of a village on Friday morning.

“Even this morning (Friday) at Mbakpa village, there was an exchange of gunfire between Fulanis and the villagers. One person was reportedly killed,” she said.

Mrs Igbabon said she had reported the incident to security operatives in the state. When contacted, the spokesperson of the state police command, DSP Catherine Anene, confirmed the attack on Gwer West and said that five people were killed. Anene said she was yet to get a report of the incident in Katsina Ala Local Government Area.

Meanwhile, a military source told Saturday Tribune on Friday that 19 people were killed in Katsina Ala local Government Area, adding that the act was perpetrated by local bandits. “It is true that 19 people were killed in some villages in Katsina Ala Local Government yesterday (Thursday) but it (killing) was carried out by bandits in the area,” the source said.

Taraba

On the Thursday killings in Gassol and Bali local government areas of Taraba State, a community leader, Mr Orkurga Terkimbi, told Saturday Tribune on Friday that 12 bodies were recovered from bushes in Ijever, near Sabon-Gida, in Gassol Local Government Area.

Two other persons were also reportedly killed and 11 others injured on Thursday night by suspected Fulani herdsmen in Pangari community in Bali Local Government Area. The state Police Public Relations Officer, DSP David Misal, confirmed the attacks.

Saturday Tribune gathered that three persons who sustained injuries in the attack in Gassol were receiving treatment in a private hospital in Sabon-Gida, while the 11 others who were injured Pangari attack were receiving treatment at the General Hospital, Bali.

It was learnt that the situation has forced hundreds of people, mostly Tiv farmers, to flee, on Friday, to Jalingo, the state capital. The refugees, who are now camping at NKST Church, Mayo-Dassa, NKST Church, Kufai and other locations, said the attackers sacked Pangari and Sansani communities in Bali Local Government Area and Numbe, Ijever and Sindelde in Gassol Local Government Area.

Chairman of Tiv Cultural and Social Association in Bali Local Government Area, Mr Matthew Baki, told newsmen that two people were killed on Thursday night with 11 others wounded.

“The suspected Fulani militia attacked Pangari at about 2.00 a.m., killed two people and wounded 11 others.

“This morning, the police in Bali came and evacuated the corpses and the injured to General Hospital, Bali.

“Many people are fleeing the area now. The number of people leaving the area has overwhelmed motorists. Some women and children are fleeing on foot and heading towards Jalingo and Mutum Biyu axis,” he said.

A cleric, Reverend father George Dogo, told newsmen that his church in Mutum Biyu was packed with people fleeing attacks on their communities. The Catholic priest lamented the attacks and appealed to the relevant authorities to arrest the situation.

“The escalation of the attacks is worrisome. From the reports I am getting, the people are being attacked without any form of provocation.

“I don’t really know what is going on, but I want to appeal to the relevant authorities to halt the escalation of the attacks and killings,” Reverend Dogo said.