

Again, suspected herdsmen kill 12 in Benue

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SUSPECTED herdsmen, in the early hours of Sunday, launched simultaneous attacks on some communities in Ado Local Government Area of Benue State, where 12 people were killed.

Several people have also been reported missing with over 5,000 people displaced.

The lawmaker representing Ado/Ogbadibo/Okpokwu federal constituency, Francis Otta Agbo, had told *Nigerian Tribune* that Izzi settlements of Tologa, Ndi-Obasi, Odoken in Ekile Ward in Ado LGA were badly affected.

Agbo added that the Izzi people in Obakoto, Odirewu, Offianka, Nwedoga in Ijigban Ward, among other com-

munities, have deserted the areas for fear of herdsmen's invasion.

The lawmaker also raised the alarm that "the Effium and Ezza crisis resurfaced this morning (Sunday) with so many people killed again."

Some residents of the areas affected said the suspected herdsmen invaded their communities between 11:00 p.m. on Saturday till the early hours of Sunday, killing and maiming innocent people.

Chairman of the local government area, James Oche, confirmed the attacks on five communities in Ekile council ward, just as he added that 12 people were killed.

The chairman, in a telephone chat, said the attackers might have been a re-

prisal following the killing of an old man who was living with his children numbering 23, some time ago.

The council boss said it was suspected Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB) members who crossed over from Ebonyi State to Benue might have killed the elderly Fulani man he identified as Muhammad Isah.

Oche said: "I suspect that the herders came on reprisal because of one elderly Fulani man known as Isah Muhammad, who lived in one of the affected communities that shares boundary with Ohakwu Local Government Area of Ebonyi State and was recently killed by suspected IPOB members who crossed over to the community in Ado.

"We have had peace with them (Fulani) and it was established that the Ado people were not responsible for the death of the man. The deputy governor of Benue State is aware of the situation and the Benue State government agreed to sponsor one of the deceased's children in school. I, therefore, wonder why the unwarranted and unprovoked attack on innocent people of Ado."

Oche said that combined team of security agencies have been deployed to the area to beef up security.

Meanwhile, the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO) in the state police command, DSP Catherine Anene, could not be reached as she did not answer calls made to her phone.