

25 killed, several missing in Benue communities after night invasion by herders

Rise up in self-defence, Ortom charges indigenes

Johnson
Makurdi

Babajide

Local Government.

around Tarka Local

Local

SUSPECTED armed herders on Monday night stormed various communities in three local government areas of Benue State and murdered 25 people.

Several people were also injured during the attacks, while others were abducted.

The invading herders were said to have unleashed terror on Guma, Logo and Tarka local government areas simultaneously.

Among the victims was a traditional ruler, who was killed in Gaambetiev, in Turan council ward in Logo

Fifteen people were reportedly killed at Tiortyu in Tarka Local Government, while nine persons were killed in Guma Local Government.

The state government, through the Special Adviser on Security to Governor Samuel Ortom, Lieutenant-Colonel Paul Hemba (ret'd) confirmed the attacks, adding that a total of 25 people were killed in the three local government areas.

Hemba said more people might have killed but their bodies were yet to be recovered.

He said a search team had been put in place to comb the bushes, particularly

around Tarka Local

Government. Hemba said: "The attacks actually occurred in Guma, Logo and Tarka, and so far, nine corpses have been recovered from Guma.

"In Tarka, where I am just coming from with the commissioner of police, 15 corpses were recovered, but we suspect more corpses may be recovered from the bushes.

"We are arranging a search team to go into bushes because some people are still missing.

"It is also believed that the attackers abducted some other persons.

"For now, those are the corpses that we could physically see and count.

"In Logo, the same thing happened and a traditional ruler was murdered, but now that I'm back, I will get back to my contacts to see if the figure has risen from the one I got last night."

When contacted, the state Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), SP Catherine Anene, said she was still trying to gather the report of the attacks.

Meanwhile, Governor Samuel Ortom on Tuesday reiterated his directive to the people of the state to rise up and defend themselves.

Ortom stated this while reacting to the killing of 25 people by herders in some parts of the state on Monday night.

The governor, in a

statement made available by his media aide, Nathaniel lkyur, said: "It is becoming increasingly glaring everyday that my people are now endangered species and so we can no longer wait for help from anywhere.

"My people will have to rise up to the occasion to defend themselves and their heritage against the Fulani army of occupation.

"We are law-abiding citizens. We have cried for help against these invaders but nothing is forthcoming. We are left alone and it looks like it is a deliberate strategy. Now, we have only one option; to defend ourselves or get extinct. This is a case for our survival.

"We have been accommodating of other people in our land but our hospitality is misconstrued as weakness. We are not a conquered people. We will never be. We are free born citizens of Nigeria."

He called on security operatives to do more in crime prevention and protection of lives and property in the land, just as he urged the people to cooperate with security agencies to flush out undesirable elements in the society.

The governor further said that his administration would not shy away from its commitment to provide welfare and security for the citizens.