

Killing spree in Benue, herdsmen murder over 20

•We've recovered 8 corpses —President General, Mdzough U Tiv.

Johnson Babajide | Makurdi

GUNMEN believed to be Fulani herdsmen, on Thursday, attacked three communities in two local government areas of Benue State and killed no fewer than 20 persons.

The assailants were said to have launched attacks on Waya in Jato-Aka in Kwande Local Government Area and Mbapa and Ikyande in Gwer West Local Government Area.

While the attack on Kwande community was said to have occurred around 11.00 a.m., the Gwer West attacks happened in the evening of the same day.

In Kwande, several people were reportedly killed but so far, eight bodies were said to have been recovered, just as 12 corpses were also recovered as of Friday evening in Mbapa and Ikyande.

Reliable sources told *Saturday Tribune* on Friday that the suspected herders stormed various farms in the community and killed several people.

The eight corpses, it was gathered, were recovered after the military personnel and men of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) responded to a distress call from the villagers.

A local who identified himself simply as Akaan said "a

Fulani herder had met a man in his farm and deceptively offered to help him on the farm.

"But what happened next was that the herder called the others who came with weapons and began to shoot people as they went from farm to farm. A toddler was among the people they killed."

Also, one Akerigba, who spoke to newsmen on the phone, said eight mutilated bodies had been recovered and gave the names of the victims as Gbaeren Orsoo, Terdoo Tsega, Bemdoo Tsega, Abacha Tsega, Terkaa Tsega, Aõndõaseer Tyov, Iorhen Atim and Aõndõase Igba.

The chairperson of Kwande Local Government, Tartor Chianson, confirmed that eight corpses were recovered and taken to a morgue in Jato-Aka.

Mrs Chianson, who lamented the constant Fulani herders' attacks on the council area, said about 50 people had been killed by the herders in the past three months.

She also said that five wards within the local government had been under siege.

She said: "My people went to their farms on Thursday because it rained on Wednesday night. They wanted to prepare the land for planting but they were ambushed and killed in their farms at Waya community, close to Anwase.

"The herdsmen had come a few days ago and set a lot of houses ablaze. They also kidnapped some people and took away their motorcycles. They later brought their mutilated bodies and dumped them.

"All they are doing is targeted at collecting our ancestral home. As I speak to you, five wards, Mbachura, Kumakwagh, Yaav, Moon and Mbalkyur, are under siege and over 50 persons have lost their lives in the area in the last three months

"So far, we have recovered eight bodies, but the fear of being attacked again by the herdsmen who are still in the area has not made it possible for us to go deep to see if we can recover more corpses.

"The corpses have been deposited in the morgue in Jato-Aka."

Also, the chairperson of Gwer West Local Government, Mrs Grace Igbabon, confirmed the attacks on the two communities in the area but said she was expecting to get the casualty figure from the Divisional Police Officer.

"We have dispatched some policemen to ascertain the exact number of people involved. You know the communities are in the interior and the roads to the villages are not good.

"Vehicles cannot go there, so the DPO sent his men on motorbikes to confirm the actual number of people killed. The killing happened

in Mbapa and Ikyande at about 4.30 p.m. yesterday (Thursday).

However, the spokesperson of the state police command, Catherine Anene, told *Saturday Tribune* that she was yet to receive reports from the two council areas concerning the attacks.

"I am yet to receive any report from the two local government areas. You know that those communities are in interior, so it takes a little time before we get information," Anene said.

'We've recovered 8 corpses'

Meanwhile, the President-General of Mdzough U Tiv, the apex socio-cultural group in Tivland, Iorbee Ihagh, confirmed the killings and said that eight corpses had been recovered.

Ihagh called on President Muhammad Buhari to resign from office since he could not handle the security problem in the country.

Ihagh said: "President Buhari is the one allowing these people (herders) to do all these things because he never said anything about it. He doesn't deserve to be our president. You cannot be president and watch your citizens get killed every day.

"The president has never condemned the Miyeitti Allah. It means they are doing his bidding. If he had wanted the killings to stop, they would have stopped."

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