

## ② Suspected Fulani herdsmen kill 5, burn traditional ruler, others' houses in Benue

### • They are planning more attacks – Benue elders

Johnson Babajide | Makurdi

SUSPECTED herdsmen on Thursday attacked Nagi community in Mbachohon Ward of Gwer West Local Government Area of Benue State, killing five persons and injuring seven others.

The assailants also burned several houses, including the palace of the traditional ruler of the community.

This is even as elders in the state raised the alarm that there are plans by herdsmen to launch fresh attacks on communities in the state, particularly Gwer

West Local Government Area.

A local who craved anonymity told newsmen in a telephone interview on Friday that the Thursday attack on Nagi community occurred around 5.00 p.m.

"They came in their numbers and shot at anything in sight. The attack lasted almost 30 minutes before they ran away. It was after the situation calmed down that we saw the bodies of three men and two women on the ground. The attackers also burnt down several houses, including the palace of the traditional ruler

of the community."

The state police spokesperson, Catherine Anene, could not be reached for comment as of the time of filing this report.

However, the state government confirmed the attack and the casualty figure.

The Security Adviser to the Governor, Lieutenant-Colonel Paul Hemba (retd), who made the confirmation, said the attack was carried out by herdsmen.

Hemba said: "The attack was carried out by herdsmen. They came as usual. It was an unprovoked attack

on the community. Five people were killed.

"The damage would have been more than that but for the timely intervention of the military who chased them away before they could cause more havoc. That is what happened."

He said security had been beefed up and the military had succeeded in stabilising the area.

"Everything is calm now," he noted.

Meanwhile, a group known as the Forum of Concerned Benue Elders on Friday raised the alarm over more planned herdsmen

attacks on communities in the state.

At a press conference in Makurdi, leaders of the group, Laha Dzever and Moses Jima, reacting to a petition by 52 northern elders on the killing of several people in a settlement in Nasarawa State, noted that there were plans by herdsmen to launch attacks on communities in the state, particularly Gwer West Local Government Area.

The group faulted a claim that the Benue State Livestock Guards went outside their area of jurisdiction.

The group said: "An-

other false narrative that the Benue State Livestock Guards went outside their area of jurisdiction shows how far these ethnically motivated elders can go in an attempt to blackmail and give the Benue State Livestock Guards a bad name.

"The Benue State Livestock Guard is a body whose legitimacy has been severally challenged by pastoralists unsuccessfully.

"We are aware of the renewed threats by the Fulani herdsmen to attack parts of Benue State, particularly Gwer West Local Government Area."