

Suspected herders attack Benue communities, kill 5, rape women

•Ondo community blocks highway over abduction of residents

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① FIVE persons were killed on Thursday in renewed attacks by suspected herders on communities in Otukpo and Agatu local government areas of Benue State.

② Sources said the attackers killed four persons and raped several women during their invasion, on Thursday, of Atakpa and Ogbaulu communities in Agatu Local Government Area.

It was gathered that one person was killed in another attack on Iwili community in Otukpo Local Government Area.

The chairman of Agatu Local Government, Joseph Ngbede, confirmed the killing of four persons by the suspected herders.

Ngbede said: "They launched random shootings at Atakpa by 5.00 p.m. on Thursday and their mission was unknown to us. The attack was unexpected.

"The youth leader from Atakpa is missing. The police are still searching. And there was a threat against Ogbalu, near Atakpa village.

"As of now, four people were killed, another one was injured and one is missing."

The state secretary of Miyeitti Alla Cattle Breeders As-

sociation of Nigeria, Ibrahim Galma, said on Friday that a meeting was ongoing over the crisis.

When contacted, the state Police Public Relations Officer, Catherine Anene, confirmed the attack on Agatu but said details of the incident had not been received.

"The Agatu incident is confirmed but a detailed report has not been sent yet," Anene said.

In another development, vehicular movement and other activities were grounded on Friday at Ayede Ogbese in Akure North Local Government Area of Ondo State following a protest over the

abduction of two residents of the town.

Members of the community barricaded the Owo-Akure Road, which links the northern part of the country, to protest the abduction.

It was gathered that gunmen invaded the community and seized a popular businessman and two of his workers. The businessman, however, reportedly escaped but the kidnappers succeeded in whisking away the two workers.

One of the protesters explained that the hoodlums carried out the attack in the early hours of Friday.

He said youths of the community decided to protest the

incident by blocking the road. The blockade lasted several hours.

He said: "The kidnappers attempted to abduct three residents but one of them escaped in the process and the other two were taken away by the gunmen.

"We combed everywhere but they have moved away from this area. We had to troop out to condemn the abduction and draw the attention of relevant authorities, the state government and security agencies, to rescue these men."

It took a detachment of men from the police division in the area to restore normalcy

in the community after the protesters rebuffed entreaties from the leadership of the town to vacate the road.

The state police spokesperson, Funmi Odunlami, said the police had been able to restore normalcy in the area.

Odunlami appealed to the youths to allow peace to reign while assuring that security agencies have commenced a search for the kidnapped victims with a view to rescuing them.

Also, the state Public Relations Officer of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Daniel Aidamenbor, said efforts were on to deal with the situation.