

# Many killed, houses burnt as bandits take over Benue communities

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MANY people have lost their lives after suspected herders invaded some communities in Apa Local Government Area of Benue State.

The herders were also reported to have burnt several houses in some communities as villagers fled their homes.

Locals claimed the figure of casualty hovers around 25, but the lawmaker representing the area in the state assembly, Abu Umoru, said he had lost count of casualty.

Umoru said about 95 percent of communities in the local government area has been desolate, following the constant attacks.

He said: "About 95 percent of a section of my community is displaced and I can mention them.

"The entire Edikpo community has been displaced; the entire Opaha, where I come from, nobody is in that community; Odugbo, nobody is there; Akpete, Ikobi, Akpata, Idiaha, Ochumekwu, Adiga nobody is in those communities.

"Everyday, they will be burning houses in Akpete.

As I speak with you, for three consecutive days, they have been going to Akpete and burning houses after chasing residents out of their ancestral homes.

"They have been laying ambush, killing people; one, two three to five persons on a daily basis.

"Right now, I don't know the number of casualties. It's so many."

Umoru added, "I have gone to my communities to sympathise with my people and because of the killings, I have developed a problem that I have to go to the hospital for check-up.

"The killings are terrible. Even yesterday [Wednesday], on the highway around Nasarawa Toto leading to Oweto, up to Otukpo, between a village called Ojantele and Orozo, herders put their cows on the road for hours, no movement until the Hausa people who travel on these big trucks came down and talked with them before they left the road."

Meanwhile, the state Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Catherine Anene, said she did not have report of the situation.