

Bandits kill 19 in Benue renewed attacks

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SUSPECTED herders have killed about 19 people in renewed attacks on some communities in Kwande Local Government Area of Benue State.

In the first attack, which was reported to have occurred on Saturday, 16 farmers, who were returning to their village, were killed on Kashimbila road and their bodies thrown inside River Katsina Ala.

According to a resident from Mbanduwa who did not want to be mentioned, "The farmers were returning to their community in Mbanduwa ward when they were ambushed on Kashimbila road and killed.

"Their bodies were dropped inside River Katsina Ala."

The second attack, which occurred on Monday afternoon at Boaguwa in Kumakua council ward in the same local government, was said to have claimed three lives.

It was gathered that residents

of communities within the area have fled to Jato Acka for safety.

The President-General of Mzough U Tiv Worldwide and leader of the three socio-cultural groups – (Mzough U Tiv, OchiitaK'idoma and Om'Ngede), Comptroller of Prison, Iorbee Ihagh (retd) confirmed the killings.

He added that all the six council wards in Turan within the local government have been deserted.

Ihagh, who was at Jato Acka when he spoke with the Nigerian Tribune on the phone on Monday evening, said 16 farmers were killed on Saturday and their bodies dumped inside River Katsina Ala.

He said, "I am right now in Jato Acka. I was told that 16 farmers were killed on Kashimbila road at the weekend and their bodies thrown into River Katsina Ala.

"As I am talking to you now, armed herders have attacked

Boaguwa in Kumakua council ward, three dead bodies have been recovered.

"People have fled their communities and taken refuge in Jato Acka, and I doubt if this place [Jato Acka] is safe right now."

Ihagh, who claimed that all the six council wards in Turan in Kwande LGA have been overrun by suspected herders, appealed to President Bola Tinubu to deploy more troops in the local government area.

When contacted, the Special Adviser to the Governor on Internal Security, Joseph Har, directed the Nigerian Tribune to the Director-General, Internal Security, Israel Gbawuam, for confirmation.

However, Gbawuam's telephone number was out of reach when the **Nigerian Tribune** tried to call him.

Similarly, efforts to get the state Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Catherine Anene, were not successful.