

# Benue gov fumes as angry youths burn down monarch's palace, LG secretariat over killing

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**B**ENUE State governor, Rev Fr. Hyacinth Alia, on Tuesday decried the killing of three operatives of the state's security outfit codenamed Civil Protection Guards, and the protest that followed.

The Chief Press Secretary to the governor, Kula Tersoo, in a statement in Makurdi on Tuesday said that the governor condemned the attack and murder of three brave members of the Civil Protection Guards who he said "were on duty to protect our locals at On-MbaAondo, Tsambe-Mhesev ward of Gwer-West Local Government."

He described the attack by suspected armed herders as a

flagrant affront on the peace and security of communities.

The statement reads in part: "We appreciate the deep rage and frustration that has led to the anxiety at Naka, the headquarters of Gwer-West, including the regrettable burning of the local government secretariat and the palace of TerNagi by protesters.

"While we empathise with the sentiments of our people, we advocate restraint and foresight in funneling this anger. Destruction of our own worth simply serves to frustrate the intentions of our government, which is devoted to building up peace and security in the state."

The governor called on all security organs to intensify

efforts to arrest the perpetrators of the heinous atrocity.

"It is essential that these marauding herdsman are (made) to (face) justice to ensure that they face the full wrath of the law," the governor said

He emphasised that his government was doing all that is necessary to enhance security and protect communities from further attacks, and implored "all citizens to stand vigilant and collaborate with security agencies in reporting unusual activities."

"In these trying moments, let us stand banded together against violence and endeavor for peace and justice in Benue State. Together, we can conquer these challenges and establish a healthier envi-

ronment for all."

Earlier on Tuesday, some angry youths in Naka, headquarters of Gwer West Local Government Area of the state, had embarked on violent protest and burnt down the palace of the traditional ruler, local government secretariat as well as individuals properties.

The angry youths were said to be responding to the gruesome killing of three personnel of the state security outfit in Garuwa community, whose bodies were brought to the council headquarters early on Tuesday.

Residents from Naka told our correspondent that as soon as the youths sighted bodies of the personnel who were reportedly killed by sus-

pected armed herders, they went wild and embarked on violent protest.

The irate youths were said to have marched to the council secretariat, palace of Ter Naka and other properties belonging to prominent politicians in the town and set them ablaze.

Chairman of the local government, Victor Omirin, confirmed the violent protest.

"Yes, they burnt down the secretariat and the Ter Naka palace. Three protection guards were killed in Garuwa; so, when their bodies were brought to Naka, it sparked protest from the youths and it has now been taken over by hoodlums," he said.

Also speaking to our correspondent on the phone,

the traditional ruler of Naka, His Royal Highness Daniel Abomtse, confirmed the burning of his palace.

He said, "I was in Makurdi for medical check-up only to be called early this morning that some hoodlums had burnt down my palace.

"I had to rush back only to discover that three vehicles and motorcycles as well as other variables were burnt down."

Police Public Relations Officer in the state, Catherine Anene, confirmed the protest and said that the Commissioner of Police, Hassan Yabanet, had left to Naka to assess the situation and promised to give details later.

She was yet to do that as of the time of filing this report