

# 15 killed in Benue communities

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SUSPECTED armed herders have killed 15 people in a renewed attack in Ogwumogbo and Okpo'okpolo communities in Agatu Local Government Area Benue State.

Several people were reportedly missing in the attack that started on Saturday evening and continued into early hours of Sunday.

According to locals who spoke to journalists on phone on Sunday, about 15 persons were killed in Ogbayi and Ogwumogbo communities respectively.

"There was a small stream there called Abekoko, one Ali from Ogwumogbo and 14 others whose names were not known were killed.

"Our farming communities are now deserted, with residents fleeing to neighbouring areas in search of safety.

"The situation is dire, especially for women and children, who are urgently in need of assistance."

Former vice chairman of Agatu LGA, John Ikwulono, confirmed to journalists on Sunday that 15 people were

killed in the coordinated attacks along Ogwumogbo and Okpo'okpolo axis of Agatu Local Government Area, LGA, of Benue state.

He said, "15 people were killed in the attacks in Ogwumogbo and Okpo'okpolo axis of Agatu Local Government Area

"The attacks also left several persons, most of who were traders, injured and some missing."

He said that the victims of the attacks which occurred Saturday evening, were returning from Oweto market after the day's business and heading to their various communities when they ran into the ambush.

Chairman of Agatu LGA, Melvin James when contacted said, "I'm too emotional to speak on this incident. This is the first time we are witnessing this, since I became Chairman; I'm sad."

Efforts to get confirmation from the Benue State Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), CSP Catherine Anene, proved abortive as she could not respond to text messages and calls.