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## Scores killed as soldiers attack Fulani herdsmen in Nasarawa

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**Director of Defence Information, Maj.-Gen Chris Olukolade.**

Scores of people were on Thursday killed in a Fulani settlement near Keana, in Keana Local Government Area of Nasarawa State in a gun duel between soldiers and suspected Fulani cattle breeders.

Many were also said to have been wounded during the incident which occurred barely 24 hours after the military deployed troops in Benue and Nasarawa states to curtail the rising attacks on communities by cattle rustlers.

It was learnt that the soldiers allegedly attacked the herdsmen at a funeral.

Although the military, said it had no details of the killings as of 5pm on Thursday, Channels Television put the toll at 20.

The Defence spokesman, Maj.-Gen. Chris Olukolade, according to Channels, promised an investigation of the incident to ascertain if those who carried out the attack were indeed soldiers.

Other unconfirmed reports however said the number of the dead who were mostly residents of the area was above 30. An unofficial source said that some bodies were taken to the Dalhatu Araf Specialist Hospital, Lafia, in a police van while about 20 others were deposited at the mortuary of the General Hospital in Keana.

He added that the soldiers attacked the herdsmen following a tip-off about their hideouts in Tse-Azer and Maraba Giza area of the state.

The herdsmen were said to have forcibly occupied the communities on the grounds that they were their ancestral homes.

It was also learnt that the troops seized some sophisticated weapons from the cattle breeders who were caught unaware.

A resident of Keana, who said the soldiers arrived in Armored Personnel Carriers, added, "The military killed the cattle rustlers and were able to recover many weapons from them.

"This part of the state has received and seen strange Fulani faces more than any time in the history of our existence in Keana and its environs. We wonder where they came from because they are not the normal Fulani that we know.

"Most of them don't even have cows and one continues to wonder what their work is in this state."

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