

# Death toll in Benue herdsmen attack hits 59

June 20, 2016



*Peul (Fulani) herdsmen from Macina cross the Niger river with their cattle. This event, crossing the waters, recalls two myths: the ancestors of the Peul's journey from India, during which they crossed the Red Sea to reach Africa, and the origin of the cow which, according to an African myth, sprang from the water. A very important ritual which, not by chance, coincides with Mali's national day (21.10).*

## Attah Ede, Makurdi

AT least, 59 persons were late Saturday night and early hours of Sunday allegedly killed following the renewed hostilities between suspected Fulani herdsmen and farmers at Turan Council ward of Logo Local Government Area of Benue State.

Our correspondent learnt that the attack also left so many members of the community with varying degrees of injuries while several others were still reported missing and property worth millions of naira destroyed.

According to a source, the suspected armed herdsmen stormed the Gabo Nenzev community in large numbers from the neighbouring Nasarawa State, shooting sporadically and burning down

houses at the time of filing this report.

The source further said the attackers were over 3000, spread across the council ward and were moving round, destroying houses and farms. However, the source said, policemen drafted to the areas watched helplessly.

The attack came a week after the state governor had sent an executive bill to the state House of Assembly to make a law that would prevent opening grazing reserves in the state.

A member representing Logo Constituency at the state Assembly, Mr. Kester Kyange, told our correspondent in a text message that, “as of this morning, the calls I made confirmed to me that about 59 persons including a traditional ruler were killed while many others are still missing. The women, children and the elderly have all fled their homes to take refuge in Ugba, headquarters of Logo LG.”

According to him, he had already visited his constituency to commiserate with the families of victims and met with the council leadership, traditional rulers and security agencies to find lasting solutions to the insurgency.

Kyange called on President Muhammadu Buhari to come up with a clear policy that would end the problem of Fulani herdsmen and farmers in the country.

The Police Public Relations Officer, Benue State Command, ASP Moses Yamu, confirmed to our correspondent that there were other attacks in the early hours of Sunday, disclosing that more mobile policemen had been drafted to the area to forestall further attacks.

He said the police had been mobilised and left for the area to ensure that the incident did not degenerate into an uncontrollable situation.

Suspected Fulani herdsmen had invaded Ugondo, in Logo LGA of the state, killing no fewer than 15 persons on Saturday.

It was learnt that the marauders, who razed part of the community, also took over the deserted villages.

A fleeing member of the attacked community, who spoke to our correspondent, said, “The attackers shot sporadically and the villagers fled, including myself and members of my family, for fear of being killed.

“The situation in Ugondo, at the moment, is scary and we are helpless. It is as if we are in a war situation, where the mission of the invaders is to occupy and take over our villages.

“It is a pathetic situation because corpses are littering the community, though one cannot give a specific number of the dead which should not be less than 15 but I know that the casualty figure could be huge because many have been wounded as bullets continue to fly around.

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