

NEWS

# Four feared dead in Adamawa herdsmen attack

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Some Fulani herdsmen. File copy

***Olalekan Adetayo, Femi Makinde, Samuel Awoyinfa, Olufemi Atoyebi, Chukwudi Akasike, Hindi Livinus, Justin Tyopuusu, Gibson Achonu***

No fewer than four persons are feared dead following a midnight attack by suspected herdsmen on Kikon, a village in the Numan Local Government of Adamawa State.

The herdsmen were said to have stormed the community around 1am on Sunday, burning down the entire village and killing two men and two women.

Othman Abubakar, the Police Public Relations Officer for the Adamawa State Police Command, confirmed the attack, adding that four people were killed in the incident.

the community.

A community leader, Dr John Gamsa, told *The PUNCH* that the security men deployed in the community did nothing to protect the villagers during the attack.

He said, “The deployment of five units of mobile policemen in our area was meant for the protection of Fulani herdsmen.

“The soldiers drafted to this area were just sitting and watching while the herdsmen have their fill of blood.

“As far as I am concerned, the only job of the policemen is to attack members of the community when they want to fight back against the Fulani herdsmen.

“Since the IG deployed his men in this area, the attacks have increased. The Federal Government is not sincere enough as it has not done anything to stop the attacks.”

Kikon is the eighth community that has been attacked in the Numan and Demsa areas between December 2017 and January 2018.

### **Helicopter loaded with arms lands in Taraba village –Govt**

A helicopter suspected to be loaded with arms and ammunition was said to have landed on Saturday in Jibu, a village located along River Benue, in the Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State.

The Senior Special Assistant to Governor Darius Ishaku on Media and Publicity, Mr. Bala Dan-Abu, told one of our correspondents that the arms and ammunition were allegedly meant for a militia that might be planning attacks on Taraba villages.

“This system of arms delivery was used prior to the tragic attacks on Agatu communities in Benue State last year, which led to the death of three persons.

“That strategy worked for them in Agatu and they are using it again. This could be another planned militia attacks on the people of Taraba,” he said.

Aji, who spoke on the telephone, said he had contacted the Chairman of the Wukari LGA, Daniel Adi, to be on the alert, adding that security agencies were investigating the report.

The LGA chairman, Adi, said he had sent his surveillance team to the area.

The state Police Public Relations Officer, ASP David Misal, dismissed the information as a rumour.

Misal said, "For now, the information remains a rumour, but we have our men there. As soon as we have further information about the issue, I will get back to you."

### **'Foreigners being used to kill in Benue, others'**

An affiliate of the Islamic State, Islamic State in West Africa (ISWA), operating in some North-Central and South-South states of Nigeria may be responsible for the killings in Benue State and other parts of the country.

This information was contained in an intelligence report presented to President Muhammadu Buhari by security agencies, including the Department of State Services.

A top government official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, told one of our correspondents on Sunday that security agencies told the President that the ISWA network had been using foreign terrorists and recruiting young men to fight and kill innocent persons "ostensibly to exacerbate tensions along the country's ethnic, religious and regional lines."

He explained that the information was got from arrested suspected attackers made up of Fulani herdsmen, government-sponsored militias and militants in Benue State.

Among those in custody, according to the Presidency source, are many suspects who cannot speak any of the Nigerian languages.

They were, however, said to be fluent in French language.

Only in Okpella and Benin, as well as in Okene, Kogi State.

“It is understood that the cell, which has members in different parts of the country, concentrates on recruiting young men to fight for the Islamic State in West Africa.

“There was intelligence that they planned several attacks before and during Christmas and the New Year. Their targets included fuel depots, foreign missions and police and military establishments.

“Their network is very wide. But the DSS, which made a significant number of arrests in the last two months, helped to pre-empt those attacks.

“This helped to save Nigeria from a spate of major terrorist attacks witnessed elsewhere which were syndicated by ISIS worldwide.”

He added that the reports submitted to the Presidency revealed that security officials feared an influx of other ISIS members into of the country.

“We are learning more and more about this complex and sophisticated network. This is the main reason that the secret service is not parading the arrested suspects,” he added.

The Senior Special Assistant to the President on Media and Publicity, Garba Shehu, said Buhari had been receiving a lot of reports on the killings in Benue and other states.

Shehu, however, said he had no knowledge of the content of any of the reports.

“President Muhammadu Buhari has been receiving reports on the situation in Benue and other states.

“I can also confirm that the DSS has recorded successes lately, but I have not been briefed on any of the reports submitted to the President,” the presidential spokesman said.

**PFN, CAN, CRM reject cattle colony**

The Chairman of the South-East PFN, Dr Cosmas Ilechukwu, who is also a former chairman of CAN, Imo State chapter; and the General Overseer of the Charismatic Renewal Ministries International, said on Sunday that he spoke for CRM, PFN and CAN.

He said cattle belong to individuals and not the entire nation, adding. “It will be a gross abuse of office to take over people’s landed property and give it to others for their private business.

The rejection of cattle colonies is part of the communiqué issued at the end of the CRM Annual Leaders’ Retreat in Owerri, Imo State, on Sunday.

The communiqué stated its support for the anti-open grazing bill of the Benue State Government and urged other states to adopt same.

It advised all cattle owners to adopt ranching, which it said was a standard practice.

It condemned the attacks on several villages in Benue, Kaduna, Adamawa and Taraba states.

It said, “They are not herdsmen; the herdsmen we have known over the years do not carry sophisticated guns.

“Ordinarily, one is not permitted to carry a gun without a licence. And even when licensed, one can only carry a single or double-barrelled gun, not an AK-47 gun. But Fulani militia members go about with sophisticated weapons and nobody has arrested them.”

The communiqué frowned on the failure of President Muhammadu Buhari to respond promptly to the genocide in Benue, adding that his refusal to visit the affected communities scored him very low in his value for human lives.

The groups called on Buhari to overhaul the nation’s security architecture and hierarchy for more effective performance.

with the security apparatus,” the communiqué added.

### **Oluwo suggests hay cultivation**

The Oluwo of Iwoland, Oba Adewale Akanbi, has said the Federal Government’s proposed cattle colony would not end the frequent clashes between Fulani herdsmen and farmers.

Oluwo said it would be impossible for the FG to create cattle colonies all over the country, adding that the move would be opposed.

The monarch, who spoke with one of our correspondents on the telephone, said instead of creating colonies for cattle, the Federal Government should encourage ranching and hay cultivation to feed the animals.

The monarch also advised the FG to include traditional rulers in the committee they created to look into the killings by herdsmen.

Akanbi said. “The Federal Government should include monarchs in the committee headed by Vice President Yemi Osinbajo. The monarchs are closer to the people at the grass roots than the governors and that is why they should include the monarchs in Benue, Taraba, Adamawa and other states where the crisis is prevalent.

“Hay cultivation to feed cattle is the practice in Western countries. They don’t drive their cattle for thousands of kilometres like we do here. Their animals are healthier, fatter and they make more profit from the business. Their cows weigh an average of 600 kilogrammes unlike our animals that are usually very lean and tough.”

### **‘Ogun has solved herdsmen, farmers clashes’**

The Ogun State Government says it welcomes anyone to the state, adding that such a person must obey the laws of the land.

The Secretary to the State Government, Taiwo Adeoluwa, said this to one of our correspondents on the telephone on Sunday.

coexistence among the citizens and others who came to settle there.

He said, “When the Senator Ibikunle Amosun-led administration was elected in 2011, one of the challenges it solved was herdsman–farmer clash in the Yewa area of the state.

“The administration set up an inter-community and inter-party committee which met quarterly and amicably settled disputes between herdsmen and farmers in the zone. This template has been working for us.”

When asked whether the state would allow any grazing colony, he said, “I don’t know what you mean by that.”

### **Cattle colony strange –Oyo**

The Oyo State Government said on Sunday that cattle colony was strange to the state, adding that it would not allow any practice that infringed on people’s rights.

The Commissioner for Agriculture, Natural Resources and Rural Development, Oyewole Oyewumi, who said this, added that the state recognised ranching.

He said, “We encourage ranching over any other methods of cattle production. We have heard talks about grazing reserves and recently about what they called cattle colony. Cattle colony sound strange to us; so we await further explanations as to what a cattle colony is.

“If a cattle colony means an open area where cattle will be allowed to just walk around in a free range, I don’t think the Oyo State Government will be able to accommodate that. That is our position and that is where we stand on the matter.”

Oyewumi said the state government had a bill before the state House of Assembly which would regulate activities of herdsmen.

“We are also looking at one or two areas where the state can support and ensure that one activity does not necessarily encroach on the other because that has been the cause of this crisis,” he said.

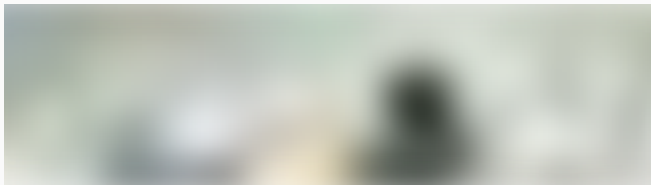
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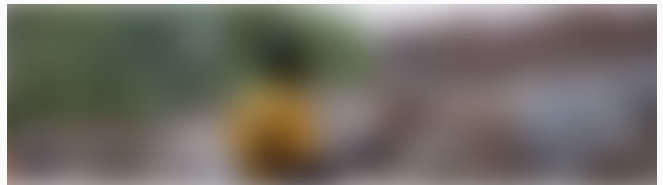
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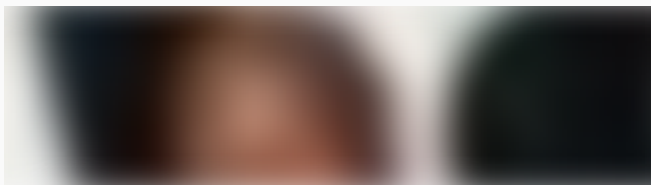
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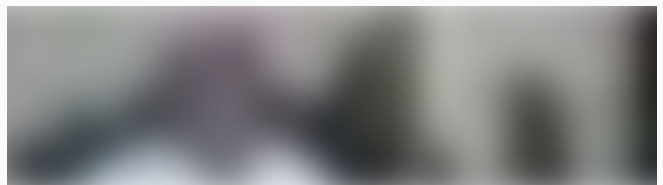
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