

Again, herdsmen attack Benue villages

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FILE PHOTO

John Charles, Makurdi

Scores were killed between Tuesday night and Wednesday morning when suspected killer herdsmen attacked some villages in Guma and ‘Gwer West Local Government Areas of Benue State.

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Though, the casualty figure had yet to be ascertained as of the time of filing this report, unconfirmed sources said scores of the villagers were killed during the attack.

For instance, in Guma from where Governor Samuel Ortom hails from, about 28 people were said to have been killed between Tuesday evening and the early hours of Wednesday.

Eight other persons were said to have been killed in 'Gwer West Local Government, while 15 others were reportedly killed in Tomanyiin-Mbakpaase community in Saghev ward of Guma LG by the herdsmen.

It was gathered that the heavily armed men, numbering over 50, invaded the affected communities at about 7am and set the entire village on fire.

It was further learnt that scores of people, among them women and children, have fled the area.

A source from the area, who spoke with our correspondent on phone on condition of anonymity, said the killers burnt down all the houses.

According to one of the natives who did not want his name mentioned, 17 bodies were recovered at Tse Ali Agudu Mbanyoar community.

Another source from Tomanyiin-Mbakpaase in Saghev said, "The herdsmen came yesterday (Tuesday) evening and set our houses on fire. Many of us slept in the bush even the attackers still returned to the village and burnt down the whole village. We were able to recover eight corpses this afternoon."

He added that no single house was standing in his village.

The locals also said some of the survivors who sustained varying degrees of injury including a pregnant woman had been taken to Wantor Bem Clinic at Daudu where some corpses were also kept.

The chairman of Guma LGA, Mr. Anthony Shawn, confirmed the attack on phone but could not give the casualty figure.

"I came to Makurdi just now to arrange for doctors that would go with me to the place we kept the injured victims to ascertain their state of health.

"As I speak with you, I am also on my way to Daudu with a team of doctors who will treat the victims and administer medications to the displaced persons. It is when am done with this, that I can properly

brief the press.Thanks,” Shawn explained.

The Chief Press Secretary to the governor, Terver Akase, confirmed the attack on Guma, saying 14 people were killed by the suspected herdsmen.

“Yes, I heard the attack on Guma, I was told that 14 people were killed but I’m not around now,” he said.

In Gwer West, the herdsmen were said to have attacked a group of locals who had gone to their village in Abiam, in Sengey Council ward of Gwer West LG around 4pm on Tuesday. The village had earlier been sacked by the herdsmen.

It was gathered that eight persons were killed in the attack by the herdsmen who first abducted their victims before executing them yesterday (Wednesday) morning.

A resident of Gwer, West Francis Ugbede, told our correspondent that the victims who had been taken refuge in Naka, had gone home to find out whether they could return home when the herdsmen attacked them.

The Chairman of the council, Francis Ayaga, told our correspondent on phone that the marauders ambushed the displaced people in his area and killed them.

He said he could not ascertain the number of those killed yet, saying he was still gathering information on those killed, adding that the attack started yesterday (Tuesday) evening and continued till this morning (Wednesday).

“As I speak with you, 10 out of 15 council wards of the LGA have been taken over by herdsmen. The attackers are coming from Doma Local Government Area of Nasarawa State, through Rukubi and Ijuwo, cross from there to Apochi and attacked my people,” he said.

The state Commissioner of Police, Fatai Owoseni, said he had not been briefed about the attacks.