

43 killed as gunmen, residents clash in Benue, Taraba, Zamfara, Cross River

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At least 43 persons have been reportedly killed and scores injured following renewed attacks in several communities in Benue, Taraba and Zamfara states.

In Tungwa and Utsua-Daa communities in the Bali local government area of Taraba State, 11 persons were said to have been killed.

A resident of Bagoni near Tungwa, Alhaji Sale Umar, told one of our correspondents that gunmen invaded Tungwa on Thursday and Utsua-Daa on Friday, killing 11 people.

Umar said several houses in the two communities located along Bali-Marararba road were also burnt in the attacks.

He said, "We saw 11 dead bodies after the attacks. Many houses have been burnt and people have deserted the communities."

"Many people especially Tiv farmers are fleeing the communities to Bali for safety."

Caretaker Chairman of Bali Local Government Council, Musa Mahmud, confirmed the attacks but said five people were killed.

Mahmud, who said he was at the scene of the attacks, also said several houses were burnt.

Saturday PUNCH reports that the renewed attacks and killings came barely eight hours after the Taraba joint peace committee submitted an updated report on the crisis to the Deputy Governor, Mr Haruna Manu, in Jalingo.

In a related development, 11 people have been reportedly killed in three separate attacks between people suspected to be herdsmen and locals in Kwande and Guma local government areas of Benue State.

Seven persons were declared missing and several others injured in the separate attacks that occurred on Thursday.

One of the incidents, according to sources, occurred in an attack and reprisal between herdsmen and locals from Nasarawa and Benue states.

In Kwande, three herdsmen were reportedly burnt and seven persons missing in a clash between herdsmen and farmers at Tyowem border community between Taraba and Benue.

Also, another 12 people were reportedly injured on Thursday over a land dispute between Kwande and Ubaniko in Cross River State.

Chairman, Guma Local Government Area of the state, Anthony Shawon, who confirmed the attack in his domain noted that five people were killed by suspected herdsmen on Thursday at

Uhue village

Shawon said, "Five people were killed at Uhue. As I am talking to you now (1.25pm), another attack is ongoing at Torkula village. Soldiers have called for reinforcement."

"Fulani herdsmen were the ones who first came to kill our people in the village and our people (youths) went and killed two of them."

Also, the Chairman of Kwande Local Government, Tersua Yakwan, who confirmed the two attacks in his domain said three herdsmen were burnt when they strayed into farmlands in Kwande.

The chairman said seven people from his domain were missing, adding that hired militias suspected to be herdsmen from Ubaniko in Cross River State also invaded part of the local government leading to 12 people injured.

Yakwan said, "There were two incidents; one at Benue/Taraba border where some herdsmen strayed into farmlands of our people and destroyed their farms."

"It is true that three herdsmen were burnt and seven persons from our community have not been seen."

"The other attack was between our people and Ubaniko in Cross River State. Some mercenaries came to attack our people because of land. Twelve people

were seriously injured and they have been transferred to Makurdi for treatment.

"The mercenaries were well armed. When they outnumbered the police, they (the police) had to invite soldiers who brought the situation under control."

The secretary of the Miyetti Allah in Benue State, Ibrahim Galama, said some people crossed from Benue border to Nasarawa State and allegedly killed three herdsmen and their motorcycles taken away.

"I got the report that some people crossed from Benue State to Nasarawa State and killed three herdsmen and took away their bikes," Galama said.

The Police Public Relations Officer in Taraba State, DSP Catherine Anene, said she was only aware of crisis in Kwande where people were injured.

Meanwhile, 21 one people were killed by bandits in Maru and Talata-Mafara local government areas of Zamfara State in fresh attacks.

Confirming the story, the state police Public Relations Officer, SP Mohammed Shehu, said, "On 2nd and 3rd June, 2020, six villages namely: Tungar Malan, Manyan Karaje, Tungar Arne, Dangodon Maiyakane, Dangodon Mai Masallaci and Boleke in Maru LGA were attacked by suspected armed bandits with intend to rustle cows."