

Farmers kill cows, three youths murdered in reprisal

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By John Charles

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Suspected herders have killed three people at Adaka, a suburb of Makurdi, Benue State.

The incident happened on Friday when some herders invaded the community and attacked residents on their farm.

Some of the locals believed that the attack was a reprisal for the killing of some cows that destroyed their farmland.

A resident, who identified himself simply as Terkimbir, said, “Three people from this community were killed; one of them is our son, while the other two came to get land to farm rice.

“As they left for the farm, it was discovered that they didn’t return and a search party was raised the following day (Saturday) which included security men. That was when they discovered their dead bodies.”

The Special Adviser to the Governor on Security, Col. Paul Hemba (retd.), said the corpses were discovered on Saturday.

Hemba said, “When I was informed of the development, it was in the night (Friday), so we waited till Saturday morning and sent out patrols, including members of the community. In the course of the patrol, we discovered the corpses of the missing three persons brutally killed with machetes.

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“The community is suspecting that Fulani herdsmen murdered the victims. This is because the herdsmen operate in their vicinity.

“Additionally, just last week, the Fulani herdsmen alleged that some of their cows which invaded people’s rice farms were killed in that community. The community is suspecting that the gruesome murder of the three was a reprisal.

“The people said they killed the cattle because they invaded their rice farms. Most times, these farms are cultivated with loans, which must be paid back after harvest.”

The security adviser added, “From the pictures we have, you can see that the animals that were killed were grazing freely on a large rice farm and probably the owner of the farm, out of anger and frustration, attacked and killed the cows. They killed the cattle and left them on the farms they destroyed.

“These are some of the terrible things farmers have been noticing; herders will push their cows into people’s yam, cassava and rice farms and watch them destroy and graze on them after which they will walk away. It’s painful that you will tend to your farm today and when you get there the next day, it is all eaten up by cows.”

The state police spokesperson, SP Catherine Anene, confirmed the incident.