

Nasarawa killing: ACF demands probe, Ortom denies involvement

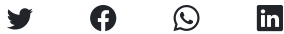
30th January 2023



Benue State Governor, Samuel Ortom

| Godwin Isenyo and John Charles

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The Arewa Consultative Forum has called on the Federal Government to investigate the circumstances surrounding a drone strike which claimed the lives of no fewer than 50 Fulani herdsmen in Doma Local Government Area of Nasarawa State on January 25, 2023.

The forum, in a statement by its Secretary-General, Murtala Aliyu, in Kaduna on Sunday, noted that the probe became necessary because only government has the power to deploy armed drones.

The northern body also called on the Federal Government to compensate the families of the slain herders.

The statement read, “The Area Consultative Forum is calling on the Federal Government to, as a matter of urgency, conduct an investigation surrounding the murder of over 50 pastoralists and butchers around Doma, Nasarawa State by a purported drone strike on January 25, 2023.

“To our knowledge, only government has the power to deploy armed drones.

“The slain pastoralists went to Makurdi, the Benue State capital to retrieve 1,250 impounded cattle from the Benue Livestock Guards after paying a fine of N29m to guards.

“Sources told the ACF that drone strike happened while the livestock were being offloaded after the owners were forced to take back their cattle in trucks from Makurdi.”

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The forum called on the government to fish out the perpetrators and make them face the law.

Ortom denies involvement

Meanwhile, Benue State Governor, Samuel Ortom, has described as mischievous, allegations linking his government to the killing.

Ortom, who spoke on Sunday at a thanksgiving mass for the inauguration of a parish house in Ado Local Government area of the state, said he did not order anyone to carry out such an act.

In a statement issued by his Chief Press Secretary, Nathaniel Ikyur, and made available to journalists in Makurdi, the governor insisted that he had “no such powers to order an air raid operation which resulted in the killings.”

Speaking on the hostilities between the people of Ezza community of Ado Local Government and their neighbouring Ebonyi State, the governor said he was working in collaboration with the Ebonyi State Governor, David Umahi, to end the incessant conflict.

He disclosed that a peace meeting between the two state governments will be held in the area as a show of commitment to bring the crises to a stop so that the people will return to their homes.