

# Suspected herders kill Benue community leader, two others

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By John Charles

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No fewer than three people, among them a kindred head, were killed by suspected herders at Igbobi in the Apa Local Government Area of Benue State on Monday.

The suspected herders were said to have stormed the community and shot indiscriminately at the villagers and abducted a community leader who was later killed.

The National Chairman of Ikobi Community Development, Akpoko Eche, confirmed the attack on the telephone to journalists.

He said, “There was an attack at the Igbobi community which is adjacent to Ikobi, the community leader was adopted and killed along with two other persons.

“The attackers are suspected herdsmen. If you like, call them bandits or unknown gunmen whatever they are, but they are killers. They started this way back on January 17, so it is a renewed attack.

“It has been a routine, almost every year at this dry season; they come back and attack people, maim and rape women and destroy their farm crops and houses.

“So, it has been a routine all this while. But this year’s own is colossal because they have wiped out almost 20 villages, if not more.”

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The paramount ruler of the Idoma nation, John Elaigwu, in a statement by his media aide, Onuminya Odoba, condemned the incessant killings by herdsmen and in particular the attack on Igbobi.

The statement read in part, “There have been a series of coordinated hostilities and violent attacks within the farming communities of Benue South, especially but not limited to Apa/Agatu corridor.

“The assailants are suspected herdsmen and cattle rearers who visit farms with hundreds of cows, destroy crops, and livelihoods, maim, rape, and kill innocent citizens, forcing many to leave their ancestral homestead.

“These recent attacks which have claimed not less than 75 lives and displaced thousands from their homes and businesses, unfortunately, brutally claimed the life of the Chief of Igbobi in Apa Local Government Area yesterday, April 3, 2023.”

Meanwhile, the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria has dissociated its members from the attacks in Apa Local Government Area.

The state Secretary of MACBAN, Ibrahim Galma, who spoke to journalists on the telephone on Tuesday said, “We don’t have people herdsmen in Apa. We don’t know them we don’t have their leaders and we don’t know where they come from.”

Efforts to get the reaction of the state Police Public Relations Officer, Catherine Anene, were not successful as her phone rang out.