



•L-R: Edo State Governor, Godwin Obaseki; Deputy Governor, Philip Shaibu and others at the Bendel Insurance Football Club Match Day 1 against visiting Kwara United at the Samuel Ogbemudia Stadium in Benin City... on Saturday. Photo: Edo State Government

Killer herdsmen gun down 87 in Benue within 48 hours

STEPHEN ANGBULU
and JOHN CHARLES

BENUE State Governor, Samuel Ortom, has called on the President, Major General Muhammad Buhari (retd.), to go beyond offering condolences by ordering security agencies to fish out the criminals behind the killings in the state.

This is as 87 people were killed in separate attacks within 48 hours in the state.

Ortom said the perpetrators of the attacks were known and must be fished out.

The governor made this known while reacting to the killing of 36 internally displaced persons taking refuge at LGEA Primary School, Mgbam, in Nviev council ward, in the Guma Local Government Area of the state.

The attack came barely 48 hours after suspected herdsmen attacked Umogidi Entekpa in the Adoka district of the Otukpo Local Government Area and killed no fewer than 46 people.

Last Monday, some suspected herders attacked the Igbo community in Apa where three people were killed. The following day, an attack in Umogidi community left three people killed.

It was gathered that suspected herders invaded LGEA Primary School, Mgbam, at about 9pm on Friday and unleashed terror on the residents, including pregnant women, who had earlier been displaced in their various communities.

The local government chairman, Mike Aba, who spoke through the Security Officer of the council, Christopher Waku,

said, "There is a primary school at Mgbam village where some people who fled their homes due to herdsmen attacks always stay and the herdsmen came and attacked them last night (Friday).

"The dead people are 34 and those injured were 40 but a few minutes ago, I received a call that two of the injured ones had died. Twenty-four corpses were recovered from the classrooms and 10 corpses were picked up on the road.

The Police Public Relations Officer, Catherine Anene, while confirming the attack, added that 28 corpses had been recovered.

"Mgbam attack is confirmed - twenty-eight corpses recovered and deposited at the hospital morgue, while the investigation is ongoing," she said.

While condemning the attack in Umogidi community that left 46 dead, the President, Major General Muhammadu Buhari (retd.), on Saturday, urged the

aggrieved parties to embrace efforts to end the "extreme violence."

"The entire nation stands united in the fight against the forces of terror and evil," Buhari said in a statement titled, 'President Buhari calls for end to extreme violence in Benue' and signed by his Senior Special Assistant on Media and Publicity, Garba Shehu.

According to Shehu, the President condemned the use of terrorism as a tool in inter-communal conflicts, urging that the attackers be found and dealt with swiftly under the law.

He also conveyed his grief and sympathy to the families of those who lost their lives due to the attack and directed the secret services, police, and military commanders to enhance surveillance on every front and to immediately review the security management in the affected areas.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with the families of those

murdered. The entire nation stands united in the fight against the forces of terror and evil," the President added.

But Ortom, who described the attack as "unfortunate," said his administration would not be provoked to take laws into its own hands.

The governor said, "We will not be provoked to take arms against anyone. We will allow the law to take its course.

"I saw the President's condolence message but he should go beyond this and issue orders to smoke out these herders and terrorists. You can imagine the pain of these people.

"People doing this are known and must be fished out. Those inviting these Fulani to unleash terror should wait until I leave office, then you can repeal the law.

"We want peace. I refuse to be provoked. How can we make progress with this type of killing? Putting blame and castigating me is not right."

Diri mourns as five die in Bayelsa boat accident

DANIELS IGONI

AT least five people have been confirmed killed in a boat accident in Okoroma community along the waterways in the Nembe Local Government Area of Bayelsa State.

The boat was said to be carrying scores of passengers and goods worth millions of naira from Yenagoa to Okpoama and neighbouring communities in Brass when it suddenly went under reportedly due to overloading last Thursday.

Three corpses were initially recovered but the police

spokesman in Bayelsa, SP Asinim Butswat, who confirmed the accident, said the casualty figure had yet to be ascertained.

Governor Douye Diri, while expressing sadness over the fatal incident, on Saturday, directed the search and rescue of the victims.

The directive to relevant government agencies, including security agencies, was contained in a statement issued by his Chief Press Secretary, Mr Daniel Amanda.

Diri added that the government would review the cause of such incidents to take steps to ensure the safety of lives and goods on the

state's waterways.

Meanwhile, the Chairman of the Bayelsa chapter of the Maritime Workers Union, Mr Ipigansi Ogoniba, told the News Agency of Nigeria that the total of victims had yet to be ascertained as rescue efforts entered the second day.

He said preliminary investigations showed that the cargo boat, MV Tari, had at least 100 passengers on board when the accident occurred, but some of the passengers swam to safety.

NAN quoted Ogoniba as saying, "The local boats are designed for heavy cargo and not for passengers, but people smuggle themselves into these boats and pay very little fares to operators.

"Unfortunately, the regulation on the use of safety is

SDP says Oyebanji's victory rape of democracy, APC hails judgement