

Eight killed as rival bandit groups clash in Benue

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Benue State map

By John Charles

No fewer than eight people were reportedly killed by bandits in two communities of Chitto and Gbeji, in the Ukum Local Government Area of Benue State.

Locals from the council told our correspondent on the phone that the casualty was recorded when the two rival bandit groups engaged in a killing spree.

The incident which started on Monday was said to have continued on Tuesday leading to the burning down of a market in the area.

The killing came barely 24 hours after a ward commander of the Benue State Livestock Guard was killed in the local government area.

Locals from the area who didn't want to be named said five persons were killed in Chitto on Monday, while another three were killed in Gbeji on Tuesday, August 22, 2023.

One of the locals who spoke to journalists in a phone conversation on Tuesday, said, "Five people were killed yesterday in Chitto, a suburb of Ukum LGA by bandits.

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"They burnt the market. It was a different attack from that of the list livestock guard who was killed in Tine Nune. Four were killed in Chitto and one was killed in the suburbs of Chitto in two different attacks making five.

Another source from Ukum LG also told journalists that the bandits killed three persons on Tuesday along the Sankera-Chitto road.

He said, "To the best of my knowledge, the bad guys are fighting themselves. I think that is the summary of what is happening there. One faction is facing the other. We have the presence of the military in Zaki-Biam and yet they continue to operate like this.

It is unfortunate.”

A member of the state House of Assembly representing the Ukum state constituency, Ezra Nyiyongo, confirmed the incident but said that information at his disposal was scanty.

“You know I don’t stay there now but when I heard of the incident I made a call to DPO who told me that three corpses were recovered so far and taken to the mortuary, beyond that I will need to confirm from him again,” the lawmaker said.

When contacted, the state command spokesperson, Catherine Anene, said she was yet to receive the information.