

Anger as gunmen kill 15 in Benue communities

2nd February 2024



Benue State map

By John Charles

Several people have been killed by suspected armed herders in the ongoing attack on communities in the Agatu Local Government Area of Benue State.

The member of the state House of Assembly representing the Agatu State Constituency, Godwin Edoh, lamented the endless attacks by suspected herders, expressing his frustrations that both the federal and state governments had not been able to stop the needless killings.

Several communities, such as Ogwumogbo, Ikpele, Okokolo and Ejima, had been attacked since the crisis broke out three weeks ago.

No fewer than 20 people, including three security personnel, were murdered in the previous attacks and residents of the affected communities had long fled.

The latest attack, which happened on Wednesday, according to the locals, affected Ugboju community where several people were reportedly killed.

A resident, who identified himself as Oche, told journalists on the phone that 15 corpses were recovered on Thursday morning, adding that several people, including children, were missing.

A former Commissioner for Information, Culture and Tourism in the state, Mike Inalegwu, confirmed the attack, saying several people were killed and many were missing.

He said, “The incident happened in the evening yesterday (Wednesday) when people were engaged in social activities. The armed herders surrounded Ugboju community from different places and attacked the people.

“The armed herders were just shooting sporadically while people were running helter-skelter. When they were done in Ugboju they moved to the deserted Okokolo and burnt down many houses.

Related News

Again, gunmen kill eight in Benue

65-year-old retired nurse, maid stabbed to death in Benue

Soldiers rescue nine abducted passengers in Benue

“We have buried nine people in my community this morning.”

Also confirming the attack in a text message on Thursday, a member of the House of Assembly representing Agatu State Constituency, Godwin Edoh, said the armed herders attacked Ugboju community.

He said, “No response from any quarter; instead, another village in the Agatu North, called Ugboju Omega, was attacked on Wednesday where 15 people were killed

“Our cry to government and security agencies for aid has fallen on deaf ears; so, we are just left at the mercy of God.

“What have my people done to this government in the state and at the federal level? I totally condemn this attack on innocent people of Agatu by this armed Fulani herdsmen who are bent on taking over and occupying our ancestral home by force.

“I’m frustrated as a representative of my people by their cries. I have forwarded all the above (gory photos of dead bodies recovered) to the WhatsApp lines of both the governor, Fr. Hyacinth Alia, and his deputy, Sam Ode.”

As at the time of filing this report, the community leaders said that several people were still missing.

But the spokesperson for the Benue State Police Command, Catherine Anene, said she had yet to receive information about the incident from the Divisional Police Officer in Agatu.

She said, “Let’s wait for the DPO, I will confirm from him. As we speak there are so many police team in Agatu who were deployed there.”