

Five killed in Gombe suspected herders attack

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File Photo: Herdsman

By Chima Azubuike

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Residents of Powishi village in Kalmai District of Billiri Local Government Area, have said no fewer than five persons were murdered during the recent invasion by suspected herdsmen.

The community members in a phone interview with *City Round*, on Friday, faulted the police report which stated that only Mallam Yusuf Akwara, was killed in the attack.

Our correspondent gathered that the violence began Wednesday afternoon and culminated in the burning of over 250 houses as of Thursday morning.

A resident, Sunday Bala, said, “They (suspected herdsmen) burnt the whole village they (suspected herders) killed about five people.

“You know we witnessed it and we have over 200 people who were injured, they burnt buildings in two villages totalling about 250 houses.”

Another resident, Salome Bako, said, “The first time they came was during the daytime when they ventured into farms asking owners to leave the farm but they (farmers) insisted that they were yet to harvest their produce.”

Also speaking with our correspondent, a resident, Danladi Joshua, decried the figures disclosed by the police authorities on the number of casualties.

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He added, “There is no Mallam killed, one of the persons killed was a retired army officer who settled in the village to farm, grandpa. I don’t know of any Mallam.”

According to a press statement signed by the state Police Public Relations Officer, ASP Buhari Abdullahi, “The command received a report that a group of people on motorbikes suspected to be herders armed with dangerous weapons invaded and attacked Powishi village, setting some houses ablaze and rustling an unknown number of animals.”

Abdullahi stated that the attack occurred in the wee hours of the morning, and a combined team of police officers and the 301 Artillery Regiment, led by Area Commander Billiri, was mobilised to contain the situation.

He said, “The assailants fled the village before the arrival of the security teams. However, the neighbouring village and security personnel were able to put out the fire.

“The Commissioner of Police, CP Hayatu Usman, visited the scene alongside the Commanding Officer 301 Artillery Regiment, Commandant Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps, and the Chairperson of

Billiri LGA to assess the situation and commiserate with the affected families and communities.”

Abdullahi assured residents that the police had deployed a team of detectives from the State Criminal Investigation Department and men and conventional police to track and bring the perpetrators to book.

Our correspondent reported that Yalmatu Deba Local Government Area in Gombe Central recently had a similar invasion by armed herders during which a farmer was killed.