

Again, protest erupts in Ondo as herders kill three farmers

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The protesters

By Peter Dada

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Hundreds of farmers from communities in the Ala area of the Akure North Local Government of Ondo State on Tuesday staged a protest against the spate of insecurity in the area.

It was gathered that the protest was triggered by the killing of three farmers by suspected herdsmen, on Tuesday morning.

It would be recalled that farmers had in March protested the alleged killing of five people by suspected herdsmen at Aba Oyinbo community in Akure North Local Government Area of the state.

That incident was recorded barely two weeks after no fewer than 14 people were reportedly murdered by gunmen in four communities—Ademekun, Aba Pastor, Aba Sunday, and Alajido—all in the same local government area.

Tuesday's protest against fresh killings saw the aggrieved farmers block the Shoprite Roundabout Area of Akure, a few meters away from the entrance of the Governor's Office in Alagbaka, causing traffic logjams for several hours.

Bearing the corpses of the farmers, the protesters said they brought the corpses as evidence to shut down notions that the killings were fabricated.

It was observed that the deceased, whose corpses were covered with leaves, were all males.

One of the protesters, who simply identified himself as Patrick, said they staged the protest for the government to know the level of insecurity in communities in Akure North Local Government and the need for proactiveness.

He said, “We are protesting not only because the Fulani herdsmen have killed our men today but to let the government know what we are facing in Ala Area in terms of insecurity.

“These three that were killed today (Tuesday) were going to their farms when they were shot by these herdsmen. Whenever they kill, they would run to Edo State. We want Governor Lucky Aiyedatiwa to do something about our security in Ala. This is getting too much.”

In a reaction, one of the traditional rulers in Ala Area, Chief Taiwo Samuel, described the incident as one too many, lamenting the inability of the government to put a stop to the incessant attacks and killings.

He said, “Three farmers were killed in the Thirteen camps in the Ajagbusi area of Ala Elefosan in Akure North Local Government. They were on their way to the farm this (Tuesday) morning when the Fulani herdsmen attacked them and shot them. One person was also killed two days ago. We purposely brought their bodies to Alagbaka for everyone to see what we are facing and to prevent any form of denial, which we have experienced in the past.

“The killing of our people by these herdsmen is becoming too much. Governor Lucky Aiyedatiwa promised us that the place would be fully secured after the last incident. With this latest development, the government must allow us to secure ourselves.

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“It is disheartening that the government will continue to allow these killings to be going on. What we are certain about is that if we should defend ourselves and kill the attackers, we will be arrested and taken to Abuja.

“During the late former governor’s administration, Oluwarotimi Akeredolu, this kind of thing was not rampant, but with the current governor, everything has gone awry. We are tired of these continuous killings; we can no longer sleep in our communities. Mr Governor should help us and stop these killings. People that are being killed are humans, not goats. More than 20 farmers have been killed in the last two months.”

When contacted, the state Police Public Relations Officer, Mr Olayinka Alayande said, “Tactical teams have been deployed to the area to restore normalcy and ensure the perpetrators were arrested.”

It was gathered that the remains of the deceased were deposited at the morgue of the University of Medical Sciences Teaching Hospital, Akure.

All efforts to reach the Chief Press Secretary to the Governor on the matter, was not successful as his telephone line indicated switched off when a call was put across to him.

The PUNCH reports that last month, 14 farmers were allegedly killed by the herdsmen in four communities of Ademekun, Aba Pastor, Aba Sunday and Aba Oyinbo.

The regent of the Ademekun Community Princess Kemisola Adelowo who expressed bitterness over the attack on her community, had called on the state governor to deploy security personnel in the community to forestall another possible attack on the people.

Adelowo said, “These boys (attackers) came to attack our village on Saturday and killed 14 people. I later received calls during the meeting that two more people had been killed by the herdsmen and that the boys were threatening to kill me. This is why I am crying out loudly and clearly to His Excellency Lucky Orimisan Aiyedatiwa, to come to our rescue from the herdsmen in Ademekun (community).

The Ondo State Governor, Mr Lucky Aiyedatiwa, had then vowed to bring to book all the perpetrators of the dastardly acts.

Aiyedatiwa, who spoke through the Commander of the Ondo State Security Network Agency, Amotekun, Akogun Adetunji Adeleye, assured residents of the affected areas of justice.

He also said adequate security measures would be put in place to forestall future occurrences.

“On behalf of the good people of Ondo State, I commiserate with the affected families. We assure residents and farmers that now that the government is here, we will secure the area and bring the culprits to justice. It is a very unfortunate situation, and we pray such an incident never happens again,” he said.