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Massacre in Borno, Benue

Our Reporter January 21, 2014 1 Comment »



- Boko Haram kills 18 in Borno, as Fulani herdsman murder 12, including five soldiers

... CDS to new service chiefs: End terrorism by April

From ROSE EJEMBI, Makurdi & MOLLY KILETE, Abuja (with agency report) Boko Haram and Fulani herdsman in Borno and Benue States massacred 30 people including five soldiers on Sunday.

In the Borno incident, Boko Haram members went on rampage, killing 18 people when they invaded a community along the Alau Dan-Alau Ngawe Fate in Jere Local Government Area, Sunday night.

Malam Ibrahim Modu, a village head, told newsmen on telephone that the attackers invaded the community at about 10p.m. "They invaded the village at about 10p.m. and set many houses and shops ablaze within a short time. They actually used some explosives and local petrol bombs to set the houses on fire", Modu said.

He said the invaders divided themselves into groups with some attacking residents while others set fire on the houses. "We lost 18 people at the end of the attack. We also lost about 100 houses, shops and grain stores", Modu noted.

Col. Mohammad Dole, the spokesman for the 7 Division of Nigerian Army, Maiduguri, confirmed the attack.

"It is true the insurgents were sighted in that general area by the locals, but we do not have details of what they did yet. Our troops have gone there to confirm what happened", he said.

Meanwhile, 12 people including five soldiers attached to the 72 Army Battalion in Makurdi, Benue State were killed on Sunday by suspected Fulani herdsman in Agatu Local Government

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Area. This is even as residents of Adeke community in Makurdi Local Government Area have completely deserted their homes for fear of further invasion by Fulani herdsmen following the relocation of all Fulani women and children from their settlement in the area.

The state police command's spokesman, Daniel Ezeala, a Deputy Superintendent, who confirmed the killings to reporters, however, declined to give further details about the identities of the soldiers. He noted that normalcy had been restored with the deployment of more policemen in the troubled area.

"Yes, five soldiers and seven civilians were killed on Sunday in Agatu, but the situation had been brought under control now. We have deployed enough policemen in the affected places and investigation into the matter has commenced."

Reacting, the state Commissioner for Works and Transport, John Ngbede, a native of Agatu, claimed that the Fulani invaders stormed the affected communities in their usual guerrilla style at about 10:00am on Sunday.

According to him, seven of his kinsmen in Oweto and Utuluwewu villages in Agatu were killed by the suspected Fulani attackers while several others were injured.

Also speaking, the lawmaker representing Agatu in the House of Assembly, Sule Audu, who told newsmen that he lost his brother, Isah Onum, a retired soldier in the crisis, expressed sadness at the incessant attacks on his constituents by the Fulanis.

Efforts to get the Commanding Officer of the 72 Battalion, Army Barracks at North Bank, Makurdi, Col. Babatunde Raji, failed as he was not in the office. However, sources who did not want their names in print confirmed that five of their soldiers were killed and that their identities were yet to be disclosed to their families due to the absence of Col. Raji.

The source told our correspondent that on the return of the commander, who is already on his way back to Makurdi, the families of the slain soldiers would be notified before the official release of the victims' identities. Also, state secretary of Miyette Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN), Garus Gololo, expressed worry over the killings of the people at a time when measures were in place to end the incessant crisis between the farmers and cattle breeders in the area.

Gololo said that the attackers must have entered the affected communities through Loko in Nasarawa State to carry out the killings as no Fulani herdsmen to the best of his knowledge are currently residing in the Idoma-speaking communities of Agatu.

He called on security agencies not to spare the invaders but ensure the culprits are arrested and made to face the law to serve as a deterrent to others.

Meanwhile, the new Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), Air Marshal Alex Sabundu Badeh, has given the new service chiefs April deadline to end Boko Haram attacks.

He has sent a message of warning to sympathizers and sponsors of the Islamist sect to stop their brutal activities and embrace peace or be ready to be wiped out.

Badeh, while calling for all hands to be on deck to face the insurgence squarely and stop their activities before April, said this has become necessary so that government can concentrate on national transformation.

He said: "The insecurity situation in the North-East must be brought to a complete stop before April as consequences of not doing so would be grave.

He said the war against Boko-Haram was already won and told the terrorist group that "we are coming after you".

The CDS, while warning that service rivalry would no longer be tolerated in the Armed Forces in the fight to wipe out insurgency, noted that "service rivalries have no place on the battle-field where success not credit is the professional currency".

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