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Blood flows again in Benue, Borno

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BY OUR REPORTER ON MARCH 26, 2014

COVER

From ROSE EJEMBI, Makurdi and TIMOTHY OLANREWAJU, Maiduguri

It was a bloody day for residents of Benue and Borno states yesterday when suspected Fulani herdsmen and Boko Haram killed 70 people, among them five policemen.

The bloodbath came despite an appeal by Senate President David Mark, Tuesday urging terrorists to stop the killings even as the Inspector-General of Police (IGP), Mohammed Abubakar on Monday deployed four units of Mobile Force to Benue and other troubled spots in the North.

At least, 60 people were killed in Akena Village of Mbaalom District of Gwer East Local Government Area of Benue State after gunmen suspected to be Fulani herdsmen invaded the village in the early hours of yesterday.

As at press time, remains of the dead were being moved to the morgue of the Federal Medical Centre in Makurdi where residents of the state capital tramped in their large numbers to behold the gory sight. An eyewitness from the village, who simply gave his name as Toapine told newsmen at the hospital that the invaders stormed the community around 5am shooting and killing people mercilessly.

"We were still sleeping when they invaded our village shooting and killing people. Some of us cannot even tell how we escaped because nobody knew where the shots were coming from. We were just running in all directions."

A source said the attackers who were all dressed in blacks and heavily armed with guns and ammunition while others were with machetes wasted no time in unleashing terror on the sleepy village. Meanwhile, four persons were also killed in Adeka on Oweto Market Day when suspected Fulani herdsmen overran the market. House of Assembly member representing Agatu state constituency, Alhaji Sule Audu, said yesterday that the people had gone to the market for the usual trading when suddenly the gunmen stormed the market and opened fire on them.

The state police command's spokesman, Daniel Ezeala, a Superintendent, confirmed the attack on Akena Village but insisted that the police saw only seven bodies, adding that the police would continue to search for more bodies while a team of policemen had already been deployed to arrest the invaders. In another development, suicide bombers suspected to be Boko Haram yesterday rammed their car into a waiting highway patrol vehicle of the police at a checkpoint in Maiduguri, Borno State killing five policemen, three other civilians and the bombers.

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Eyewitnesses said the bombers rode in a Volkswagen Golf car to the checkpoint in front of Dalori Quarters along Maiduguri-Bama Road and rammed the car on the patrol vehicle. "All the five policemen were killed," a resident said.

Sources said three of the policemen were sitting beside the patrol vehicle, one was at the drivers side while the fifth was standing on the road near the van when the bombers hit the vehicle. Residents around the area were terrified even as many of them fled the area yesterday.

Soldiers from the 7 Division of the Nigerian Army and youths vigilante; Civilian JTF, were quickly deployed in the area.

Police spokesman, Gideon Jubrin, a Deputy Superintendent, confirmed the incident to journalists yesterday. He said the police lost five personnel, mostly officers attached to the Federal Highway Patrol team.

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