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Fresh attack claims 6 lives in Benue

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BY FROM ROSE EJEMBI, MAKURDI AND TONY JOHN, PORT HARCOURT ON MARCH 27, 2014 ·

COVER

• Gunmen kill 12yr-old-boy, school bus driver

Gunmen yesterday went on the rampage in Benue and Rivers states killing eight people. The Rivers incident was bizarre as the victims were a 12-year-old boy and the driver conveying him and two siblings to school in a bus. The children of same parents were targeted. Two survived, but they were critically injured. In the Benue attack, six persons were killed by gunmen in two villages of Agatu Local Government Area barely a day after they opened fire in a local market in the area and also killed four persons. Commissioner for Works, Mr. John Ngbede, who hails from Agatu LGA, said the six victims were killed in Enjila and Ogbagaji, headquarters of the council.

He explained that four of the deceased were attacked and killed in their farms while the other two were passersby who met their untimely death in the hands of their assailants between the two villages.

Ngbede appealed to security agencies in the state to deploy more personnel in the area as it has come under severe attacks since the beginning of this week.

This is even as suspected Fulani herdsmen yesterday allegedly blocked the Makurdi-Lafia highway and searched vehicles while they forcefully forced down Tiv occupants and unleashed terror on them.

No sooner had the mayhem started on the Makurdi-Lafia Road than the story became rife on the social media, warning Benue indigenes plying the route to stay away.

Police spokesman, Daniel Ezeala, who confirmed the incident, told Daily Sun that no life was lost as policemen were immediately drafted to the trouble spot to clear the blockade and restore normalcy.

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He also debunked claims that the Fulani herders were closing in on Makurdi town from the



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international cattle market area, warning that the people should shun rumours.

Meanwhile, unknown gunmen yesterday shot three school children of same parents, killing one and the driver instantly. Two others are in critical condition. They are children of Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Ottonna of Rumuoro Ogbakiri in Emohua Local Government Area.

The children were eight, 10 and 12 years old, while the driver, simply identified as Godwin, was 27.

A source said that the incident occurred at about 7:30am in front of the family's residence in Rumuahorlu in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers state.

The source, who did not want to be mentioned, said the suspects approached the school bus driver and asked him, if the compound belonged to the victims' parents, which he confirmed.

"Unknown gunmen confronted a school bus carrying three school children, who are the children of Mr. Benjamin Ottonna of Rumuoro Ogbakiri in Emohua LGA of Rivers State. The unknown gunmen visited Benjamin Ottonna area at Rumuahorlu in Obio/Akpor LGA and asked the driver of a school bus carrying the three children if this is the father of Adaeze Ottonna's place and children.

"The children and the driver said yes. That was immediately after the children had bid farewell to their mother. Surprisingly, the gunmen shot everybody, and the first son, Precious Ottonna, died instantly".

Neighbours arrived at the scene, after the bandits had escaped and rushed them to the state-owned hospital, where the corpses were deposited.

According to the source, the two survivors, Adaeze and his brother, were in a critical condition.

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