

# Gov decries Etogi killings

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put a stop to what he called "senseless killings".

"As a responsible government, we can not fold our hands and watch the people being killed like animals under whatever excuses. This type of senseless killings will no longer be tolerated by the government.

"We will do everything possible to protect the people because that is our responsibility as a government. What I have seen here today and the testimony by the people, is a crime against humanity which must not be allowed to repeat itself.

"We have witnessed a number of killings here in the state and it is high time we rose to the occasion", he stated, adding that "nothing is worth the lives of the people".

Alhaji Kesto who was accompanied to the community by the state commissioner of police, Zubairu Muazu said the state government will work closely with all the security agencies in the state, especially the Nigeria Police so as to check the activities of the armed bandits, stressing that "as a government, we will assist them logistically, and we have started discussion with them".

Also speaking after going round the community to assess the extent of destruction by the bandits, the police boss described the massacre as a "heinous crime", assuring that the perpetrators will be fished out and punished accordingly.

## Litany of woes

The state government's warning may have been informed not only by last Saturday's attack, but by the series of attacks by bandits suspected to be herdsmen and cattle rustlers.

Between December 2016 and now, the state has witnessed at least 15 bloody attacks on communities with 50 people killed and 102 injured.

Properties worth hundreds of millions were lost to these attacks and over 5,000 people displaced from their ancestral homes.

On December 4, 2016 at Kaura and Gbada, Shiroro Local Government Area of the state, about 30 armed bandits suspected to be herdsmen, stormed the community in a commando manner by midnight shooting

sporadically.

At the end of the invasion, five people were killed while 20 others were injured and about 300 cattle rustled. Six days later, December 10, hell was let loose again, this time around in Baga, Alawa, Tungan Sakai, Laye and Dnakau, still in Shiroro Local Government as cattle rustlers suspected to be herdsmen numbering about 50 stormed these communities at 1am.

At the end of their operations, four persons were killed and seven others injured while no fewer than 1,000 cattle and 50 sheep were stolen. While these communities were picking their pieces and licking their wounds, another set of armed bandits came calling again on December 14, 2016 at Kukoki, in the same Shiroro Local Government.

The bandits, about 50, stormed the community and attacked the people, leaving six dead, 15 injured and 50 cattle rustled.

Similarly, on December 20, Kaure, Ajatan and Kwati communities still in Shiroro got their own share of the attacks.

Armed men also suspected to be Fulanis invaded these communities at 7am. At the end of the siege, three people were killed, 25 injured, including women and children while 100 cattle and sheep were taken away.

That attack was the last in 2016 as the bandits, probably went on December break only to resume their hostility this year. On January 5, they launched their first attack of the year at Angwar Umadi, in Shiroro Local Government. A midnight attack by suspected herdsmen led to the death of an SS II student, while five people were injured, 50 cattle and 100 sheep were taken away.

Almost three weeks later on January 24, 2017 at Sabon Daga community, Bosso Local Government Area, 50 herdsmen, invaded the community at 2am following a disagreement with the community over grazing land. A member of the community was said to have confronted a herder for allowing his cattle into his yam farm which led to the death of the herder.

The reprisal attack led to the death of four people including a policeman and civil defence officer. Another 15 people were injured, 6,000 displaced and N700m worth of properties including farm produce destroyed.