

Adamawa and Yobe states, at Wailo NYSC orientation camp in Ganjuwa local government area of the state, yesterday. Photo: NAN

We'll not repeal, suspend anti-grazing law -Benue

• Herdsmen kill 2

From **Rose Ejembi,**
Makurdi

THE Benue State Government has said that it will not repeal nor suspend the Anti Open Grazing Law for any reason insisting that the law was in the best interest of both herdsmen and farmers.

This is even as the state government has further reiterated its call for the sack of the Minister of Defence, Mansur Dan-Ali and the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Ibrahim Idris for abdicating their roles of protecting the lives and property of Nigerian citizens residing in Benue State.

Commissioner for Information and Orientation, Lawrence Onoja Jr. stated this while briefing newsmen on Monday against the backdrop of the recent statement credited to the Defense Minister and the IGP that the cause of the killing of more than 73 Benue in-

digenes was because of the implementation of the anti open grazing law in the state.

"The IGP's statement is highly provocative, insensitive and completely violates the basic principle of natural justice with his open bias against the innocent people of Benue State.

"He may not be the only one working against Benue State anti open grazing law as the Minister of Defense, Mansur Dan-Ali also told newsmen that the law prohibiting open grazing remains the root cause of Benue killings even though there have been killings by herdsmen in states like Adamawa, Zamfara, Kaduna, Nasarawa, Enugu, Edo, Plateau amongst others where there is no anti open grazing law in place."

Onoja who said Governor Samuel Ortom led administration had to initiate the prohibition of open grazing

bill as a direct response to the wishes of the people of the state explained that the bill passed through all constitutional processes of law-making in the state House of Assembly including public hearing across the three senatorial districts of the state.

"During this time a lot of inputs were made by stakeholders and the Nigeria Police as a Law Enforcement Institution had ample time to make any observations known before the bill was passed and signed into Law by His Excellency, Samuel Ortom.

"The State Government recalled that IGP Ibrahim Idris was ordered by the President and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, President Muhammadu Buhari to relocate to Benue State in the wake of the New Year day 2018 killings in Benue to restore peace and order but available records show that the Police Chief was sighted in the State for just a day or so and then left immediately.

He said the IGP's initial casual description of the pre-planned Benue killings by Fulani herdsmen on the 1st and 2nd of January 2018 as a mere 'communal clash' clearly showed that the Police Boss did not accord any urgency and seriousness in arresting the perpetrators of the mass murder of our people.

"His body language may have embolden these herdsmen militia to further lay false claim of ownership to the Benue Valley through a so-called right of conquest, a position advanced by the Miyetti Allah Kautal Hore and one Professor Umar Labdo of the Maitama Sule University Kano who along with other Fulani Socio-cultural organizations have been openly canvassing for the rejection of the Benue State anti-open grazing law which remain the only permanent solution to bringing about peace and development as it protects both the farmers and those into livestock rearing.