

# Bloody day in Benue, Plateau, Borno

— 7th March 2018

•30 killed in fresh attacks

Rose Ejembi; Makurdi, Gyang Bere, Jos

**It is another season of wailing and weeping in Benue, Plateau and Borno states as three separate attacks by suspected herdsmen and Boko Haram insurgents sent at least 30 persons to their untimely grave.**

Worse hit is Benue where 24 people including children, women and the aged were killed in Omusu-Edumoga, Okpokwu Local Government Area.

The incident came barely a month after the remains of 73 persons killed in a midnight bloody attack by suspected Fulani herdsmen in Guma and Logo local government areas were given mass burial on a site at the Industrial Layout along Naka Road in the state capital.

President Muhammadu Buhari is billed to visit Benue any moment, in continuation of his tour of security-challenged states, to condole with the government and people over recent attacks.

Those killed in the latest mayhem included Eric Attah and his wife, a septuagenarian, Pa Innocent Itodo, an 11-year old schoolgirl and another 60-year-old woman, Mrs. Catherine Abah among others. Godwin Igoche was also said to have lost his wife and two children while another lost his two wives.

The injured are at the St. Mary's Hospital, Ugwu-Okpoga while the bodies of the 24 victims would be buried on Friday.

Daily Sun gathered that the herdsmen who came in through the Ado Local Government axis invaded the village at about 3pm on Monday. Some of the locals said as soon as they stormed the village, they started shooting indiscriminately and killing people.

Council Chairman of Okpokwu, Olofu Ogwuche said immediately he received a report from the police that some herdsmen lodged a complaint that some people had rustled their cattle in Omusu village, he swung into action and called all the parties together for an amicable resolution of the matter.

Ogwuche said while the meeting was ongoing, he got another report that the herdsmen were already attacking the village. He had to rush there with security operatives.

"On getting to the village, we were able to recover 17 corpses on Monday evening. This morning, we recovered six other corpses and just while we are here, a corpse of a seven-year-old girl was just recovered while some persons are still missing."

Governor Samuel Ortom who visited the village for an on-the-spot assessment described the killing as unacceptable.

"We related very well until these killer herdsmen came to invade and kill our people. We will no longer fold our hands and watch. Twenty people killed in one day? This is not right, this is not acceptable. All we seek is justice and justice must be given to our people. Anything outside that is unacceptable

"I am happy the security agencies have gotten some of their (invaders) equipment that can be used to track them. We cannot surrender our state to criminals. We must all rise up and stop this evil that is posing a grave danger to all of us.

"The best they (herdsmen) could have done was to report to security agencies, which they did. What is the basis for attacking innocent people after reporting the matter? Those who rustle cattle are Fulani men and not farmers. How do you come and terrorise innocent people who knew nothing about the matter? We shall do the needful and ensure those who perpetrated the criminal acts are sanctioned according to the law."

The governor noted that the state's anti-open grazing law did not discriminate against anyone. He said the law was enacted to protect both the farmers and the herders stressing that anyone who wanted to stay in the state must learn to obey the law.

Ortom reasoned that there was no need to keep the corpses for too long said the local government would be assisted to quickly make arrangement for their burial as soon as possible.

Ortom also urged the youths of the village to team up with security agencies to police the area so that those who had deserted the village could be encouraged to return home soon.

A member of the community, Isaac Ojobo whose elder brother was also killed in the mayhem disclosed that the village had been deserted following the attack.

The Benue State Police Command in a statement signed by ASP Moses Yamu confirmed 16 people killed in the attack.