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13 killed in Kaduna, Benue

Noah Ebije, Kaduna; Rose Ejembi, Makurdi

No fewer than 10 persons were killed by bandits in Birnin-Gwari Local Government Area of Kaduna State Wednesday evening. Scores were also injured in the attack that took place in four villages in the council.

Similarly, barely a day after the visit of Vice President Yemi Osinbajo to IDP camps in Benue State, herdsmen struck again yesterday in Logo LGA the state, killing three persons and injuring many. They also razed five villages. On Wednesday, Osinbajo, who was on a two-day visit to Benue State, visited IDP camps in Anyii, Logo, where he assured the IDPs of the federal government's readiness to provide security and rebuild their homes so that they could return home as soon as possible.

The Kaduna State Police Command confirmed the attack on Birnin-Gwari. The police public relations officer in the state, ASP Mukhtar Aliyu, said seven persons were killed in the attack on Wednesday.

Aliyu noted that the bandits stormed Mashigi, Dakwaro, and Sabon Gida villages at about 5pm on Wednesday, shooting and burning down houses and farmlands in the villages.

He said the commissioner of police in the state, Austin Iwar, had ordered the immediate deployment of mobile police personnel to the communities.

The attack came on the heels of the recent inauguration of the two battalion forward operation bases at Birnin-Gwari for the 'Operation Idon Raini' at the Kanfnsnin Doka proposed base by the Chief of Army Staff, Lt. Gen. Tukur Buratai.

The villages previously raided by bandits include Mashigi, Dakwaro and Sabon Gida, among others.

A source said the bandits, who rode on motorcycles in large numbers, killed and burnt houses and foodstuffs in the various villages that they attacked.

The source added that 10 bodies were recovered from the bush, while volunteers and hunters as well as security operatives were still combing the bushes.

The Birnin-Gwari Vanguard for Security and Good Governance said: "A member of the volunteers, Malam Umar, said, so far, 10 bodies of people killed were recovered, while many are unaccounted for. Also, the bandits burnt houses and grain stocks of the affected villages. "Already, volunteers from the southern axis of Birnin-Gwari and security men have been mobilised to ascertain the number of casualties. The affected villages are in need of aid such as food, shelter and clothes."

In Benue, Daily Sun gathered that armed herdsmen, at about 6:30am, launched deadly attacks on Ukemberagya community, Gaambe-Tiev Council Ward of Logo LGA. A community leader in the area, Chief Joseph Anawah, who spoke with our correspondent, said the attackers, who operated unhindered for almost three hours, came at the time the locals were going to their farms and opened fire on them.

Anawah, who gave the names of those killed as Bem Torjem, Apedzan Chia and Akpuku Koya, said many others were injured while some people were still missing at the time of this report. He said the affected settlements were Tse-Mue, Torkaa, Mgbakpa, Torjem and Ife, adding that the situation had made villagers to desert the communities for safer havens.

Another source from the area, who did not want his name in print, averred that those who were killed were among the villagers who had just returned from IDP camps, where they had been taking refuge after herdsmen sacked them from their homes in January.

"These people just returned home from the IDP camp to commence this year's farming. Now, what they were running away from has finally consumed them. Fulani have killed them. But for how long can we continue like this?"

Confirming the report, the chairman of Logo Council, Hon. Richard Nyajo, said three bodies have so far been recovered from the area. He said he has since reported the matter to Governor Samuel Ortom, the special adviser to the governor on security, the police and other relevant authorities.

At the time of filing this report, the governor was still in a security meeting with heads of security agencies in the state. Commissioner of Police in the state, Fatai Owooseni, could not be reached because he was in the meeting.

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