

Boko Haram kills 19 herders

BOKO Haram jihadists reportedly killed 19 cattle herders on Saturday in Borno State.

Ethnic Fulani herders, besieged by a spate of armed attacks targeting their cattle, pursued Boko Haram, sparking a fierce gunfight outside Fuhe village, near Ngala close to the border with Cameroon.

"The insurgents killed 19 of the herdsmen in the fight," anti-jihadist militia leader Umar Kachalla told AFP.

Bodies of the slain herders were brought to the police by militiamen, Kachalla said.

The herders had earlier repelled an attack by Boko Haram fighters who invaded the village to steal

livestock, killing one of the militants, Mada said.

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The herders then decided to pursue the jihadists and fight them "once and for all", Mada said but were overwhelmed.

"The herdsmen were subdued by the better-armed Boko Haram gunmen," he said.

Jihadists then returned to Fuhe village and burnt homes and food supplies while herds fled, according to Ngala resident Abubakar Yusuf, who saw the dead bodies at the police station.

Boko Haram has increasingly targeted farmers, herders and loggers, accusing them of spying and passing information to the military and the local

militia fighting them.

They have also been raiding herding communities, seizing cattle — a valuable commodity in the region — to fund their operations.

Boko Haram and rival Islamic State West Africa Province are known to operate in areas around Ngala and the neighbouring town of Gamboru. ISWAP has focused on targeting military installations and troops since 2018 while Boko Haram faction is notorious for indiscriminate attacks on civilians.

However, ISWAP has been blamed for a recent increase in attacks on civilians.

In August 2014 Boko Haram seized Ngala and Gamboru, a trading hub,

but Nigerian troops retook both towns in September 2015 with the help of the Chadian military.

Despite the recapture of the area, jihadist fighters continue to launch sporadic attacks, ambushing troops and vehicles, as well as attacking and abducting farmers.

In November last year, Boko Haram abducted around 50 loggers at Bulakesa village outside Gamboru.

The decade-long conflict has killed 35,000 people and displaced around two million from their homes.

The violence has spread to neighbouring Niger, Chad and Cameroon, prompting the formation of a regional military coalition to fight the jihadists

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