

Night of horror at Benue IDP camp

• How my three sons were shot in their sleep, by distraught dad • I dislocated my knee while fleeing from gunmen —Octogenarian

8th May 2021 in Features

0

0 **151**
SHARES VIEWS

Share on Facebook

Share on Twitter





From **Rose Ejembi, Makurdi**

Hell was let loose on Tuesday at the Abagana Internally Displaced Persons IDP Camp located about 10 kilometres on the outskirts of Makurdi, the Benue State capital.

Gunmen suspected to be herdsmen stormed the area and shot sporadically, killing seven persons and injuring many others.

Time was a few minutes past midnight and majority of the over 8,000 IDPs were already asleep in their various halls, while some also slept outside due to the heat. Mama Aduma Akuhwa Atsuku, an octogenarian, who was wide awake when the terrorist herdsmen attacked the camp, said she heard the first gunshot, and then another and another until it became some kind of bullet rain. Mama Atsuku had been in the camp since 2018 when she was displaced by herdsmen, alongside members of her Umenger village in Guma Local Government area. According to her, when the gunshots became fierce and people were running helter-skelter for safety under the cover of night, she also attempted to run but fell and dislocated her knee.

"I was running into hiding and left my walking stick in the process. Because others were also running, I fell and it was only God who saved me from being trampled upon in the stampede. I was just there and couldn't stand up until one man came and carried me from the floor."

Now, Mama Atsuku had to leave the camp like many other IDPs but the question on the lips of many people is where are these IDPs going from here?



It would be recalled that despite concerted efforts by security agencies, many of the affected communities in Benue, especially those along the borderline between Benue and Nasarawa, as well as Benue and Taraba, are still being terrorised by armed bandits and so the people cannot return to their ancestral homes.

David Avese, father of seven has still not been able to come to terms with the reality that one of his sons was killed by the herdsmen bullets while his two other sons, Terkura and Joshua, are fighting for their lives at the Benue State University Teaching Hospital (BSUTH.) Speaking to *Saturday Sun* at the hospital, David said his three sons were all sleeping on the same mat when the evil men surrounded their Abagana community and started shooting.

"It was a few minutes after 12 midnight when I heard the first gunshot. Before you knew it, they had hit my compound. They shot all my three sons that were sleeping together on the same mat. One of them died and two were rushed to the hospital. As you can see, Terkura was completely naked when we rushed them here because we couldn't even wait to pick anything. The gunmen operated for about two hours without any security coming to our rescue. But while the bullet passed through Terkura's outer abdominal skin, Joshua was not so lucky as he was both shot and macheted on his hands and legs."

Mama Nguhian Gwaza, who also received machete cuts on her rib close to her breast, is now on admission at the Teaching Hospital in Makurdi. On his part, Gwabo Matthew who insisted that the attackers were members of a Fulani militia, narrated how they invaded the area and started shooting.

"Around midnight, we were sleeping when we heard gunshots and they surrounded our houses and there were no security men around. They operated for over two hours. The attackers were Fulani. By the time the attackers had completed their mission and left, six corpses were picked from the camp while many others who were injured were evacuated and taken to the hospital where one of the injured later died," he narrated.

As soon as the attackers were through with the Abagana IDP camp, they seemed to move straight to Chile Island, Mbatoho Community of Makurdi where they also attacked the people, injuring three people. One of the injured, Mrs Mbapuun Targuma, a mother of five, was shot in the hand and was almost losing her life by the time she was rushed on a motorcycle to the Teaching Hospital. Her brother-in-law, Denen Guntu, who conveyed her to the hospital, said the invaders stormed the community at about 3am and started shooting.

"We were all sleeping last night when some Fulani people, numbering about eight, came and attacked us. We didn't have any problem with the Fulani before then, so we don't know why they came and attacked us. They injured three of our people," Guntu said.

Angered by the mindless attack, youths in the area picked the remains of all the deceased victims and used them to block the Makurdi-Lafia Highway, causing a heavy gridlock on the axis for many hours. Efforts by security personnel, including troops of the Operation Whirl Stroke (OPWS) to convince them to remove the corpses from the road failed for several hours. It took the timely intervention of the state Governor, Samuel Ortom who arrived the area early enough, to calm the nerves of the aggrieved youths before they finally agreed to allow the corpses to be taken to the mortuary.

Governor Samuel Ortom, while addressing angry youths, called on President Muhammadu Buhari to live up to his responsibility of protecting Nigerians. He described the attack on the IDP camp as inhuman, barbaric and unacceptable. The governor, who called for urgent action against the activities of militia herdsmen across the country, said if the Federal Government had taken the issue of militia herders seriously, it wouldn't have escalated to this level. He lamented that in the last two weeks, over 70 persons had been killed in Makurdi Local Government alone while various communities across Benue are suffering from same militia herdsmen. Now, the journey to the unknown continues for these IDPs who have all deserted the camp in search for a new home. Already, the state deputy governor, Benson Abounu has visited victims of the attack who are receiving treatment at the Benue State University Teaching Hospital, Makurdi. He was accompanied by the State Commissioner for Lands and Survey, Hon. Bernard Unenge, Chairman, Makurdi Local Government Area, Anthony Dyegyeh, and the Chief Medical Director of the Benue State University Teaching Hospital, Dr. Swende.

The deputy governor went round the wards of the hospital to sympathise with the victims and assess their condition and the degree of injuries sustained. He described the attack as unacceptable. He noted that after chasing the IDPs away

from their homes into refugee camps, the same herdsmen still pursued them to the camps, where they savagely attacked and butchered seven of them in the dead of the night and left nine people with various degrees of injury.

Abounu said the Benue State Government could no longer condone the senseless, unprovoked killing of its people, and called on the Federal Government and the security agencies to beef up and live up to their responsibilities of protecting lives and properties of Nigerians. He also called on those in positions of authority, who are close to the perpetrators of the heinous crimes to talk to them to stop the killings. He said it was important that the Federal Government did the needful to restore the confidence of the people in its ability to protect the lives and property of all Nigerians.

Also reacting, President General of the Tiv Socio-cultural organization known as Mzough-U-Tiv (MUT), Mr Iorbee Ihagh, a retired Commissioner of Police called on President Muhammadu Buhari to stop the killings in the state, warning that failure to do so might force the people to resort to self help.

"The message I am sending to the president is that enough is enough. The killings in Benue are enough. Let him do something about it. If not, we are going to react. Even though we don't have AK47, we will do what we did in 1804 during the Jihad war." The MUT President General who noted that the country is currently on a life support, urged President Buhari to act fast to redeem the image of the country which has already been battered by the increasing spate of insecurity.

Meanwhile, the Benue State Government has taken the incessant cases of marauding herdsmen attacks on communities to the international community seeking their help to end the carnage and provide relief support to the people affected.

Executive Secretary of the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), Dr. Emmanuel Shior, who disclosed this, said the development became necessary because of the huge task resting on the shoulders of the state government on how to manage the crisis.

Speaking with newsmen on the humanitarian challenges occasioned by the killing of seven IDPs at the Abagana camp, Dr Shior who regretted the shortage of policemen in some of the camps, appealed to the Inspector General of Police to deploy more policemen to the state to secure the people living in the eight designated IDP camps.

"I also want to call on the international community to come to the aid of the IDPs. In Benue here, in the area of humanitarian crisis, we work with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), we work with International Committee for the Red Cross, we work with Doctors Without Borders and other humanitarian partners to help the state in stemming the growing insecurity situation bedevilling us," he stated.

Dr Shior expressed the fears of possible attack on other IDP camps by the assailants, even as he appealed to people of the state to join hands with Governor Samuel Ortom to ameliorate the plight of the displaced persons. He stated that the government has received reports of a similar attack at Mbagwen camp in Guma Local Government area, adding that officials of the agency have been deployed to the area to profile the IDPs to enable government extend intervention support to them.

Tags: [by distraught dad](#) [How my three sons were shot in their sleep](#) [Night of horror at Benue IDP camp](#)

You May Like

Sponsored Links by Taboola

The Real Reason Bill Gates’ Children Won’t Inherit Any Of His Fortune

Trendscatchers

Work For a UK Company, Live in Nigeria

UK Jobs | Search Ads

Residents of Nigeria Might Get a US Visa Easily

US Visa | Search



You May Like

Sponsored Links by Taboola

Real Estate Prices in New York Might Surprise You

New York Real Estate | Search Ads

This Bride Fainted During Her Ceremony All Because Her Groom Showed Her This Picture

Trendscatchers

Husband Illustrates Everyday Life With Wife In 22 Pictures, Try Not To Cry!

LoveMyFamilyMag.com

