

Again, herders spread sorrow, tears in Benue

• Kill infant, 3 others, many injured

From **ROSE EJEMBI**, Makurdi

UP until now, Sewuese Baaji, a young mother of two, is still lost as to how, before her very eyes, her three-month-old son's chest was ripped open by bullets from suspected Fulani herdsman who shot at their vehicle.

She was one of the mourners who were attacked while returning from a burial at Umenger, in Guma Local Government Area of Benue State, on Tuesday. The victims of the attack were the three-month-old baby, whose upper ribs were ruptured, Terver and his wife from Uvir, and Solomon Kumaiin, who was slaughtered by the blood-thirsty marauders.

According to her, the bus in which they were travelling left Umenger village at about 3pm and was heading back to Makurdi when, about 30 minutes into the journey, along the Uikpam-Torkula Road, they ran into the gunmen.

Sewuese is receiving treatment at the Benue State University Teaching Hospital (BSUTH), Makurdi, alongside Hembafaan Alumna, a mother of two

who was also shot by the killers.

"Suddenly, we started hearing gunshots and our driver just had to keep driving because there was no way he could make a U-turn at that place.

"The herdsman were so close behind us and we all kept praying as our driver was driving on for that was the only option. I got shot in the thigh in the process while my little baby who was sleeping on my lap also got hit in the chest.

"Sadly, by the time we got to Daudu, my baby had died because the bullet scattered his ribs. He couldn't survive it," Sewuese said as she broke down in tears.

Henbafaan Alumna said she was also with her three-month-old son when the incident happened: "We were negotiating a bend around Torkula village when we suddenly ran into the herdsman, who immediately started shooting at us.

"Our driver had to bend his head down while speeding away from the scene as bullets rained on our vehicle. It was while we were speeding off from the scene that I felt a hot substance in my thigh and then blood. It was so scary," she said.

Mama Patricia Natiav, Seuweise's mother-in-law, who was with her at the hospital when our correspondent visited, lamented the death of her grandson, saying she was with the baby all through, before the mother was ready to leave.

"It was my brother who died and my daughter-in-law accompanied me to the village for the burial. After the burial, they left while I was still in the village. About one hour later, we got news that they had been attacked and my grandson was shot dead. I'm pained," Mama Patricia said.

An brother to the deceased baby's father, David Bunde Baaji, on Tuesday night, took to his Facebook page to mourn the death of his young nephew.

"I lost my baby now by the Fulani attack in Guma along Ikpam, Torkula Road. Thank God for the life of my dear younger brother's wife. I have buried the baby now at Gboko as urgency demanded while the mother is receiving treatment for gunshot on her leg at Teaching Hospital Makurdi. With deepest regret, the family of Christopher Baaji thanks God for His mercy upon us," he said in



•Hembafaan and her surviving baby