

Group solicits govt protection, says 40 killed in June 4 Benue attacks

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From **Scholastica Onyeka**, Makurdi

The Makurdi branch of Shitile Development Association (SDA), Benue State, has sent a save-our-soul message to the government over fresh killings in their communities.

Shitile consists of the people of Katsina Ala and Logo Local Government Area (LGAs) of Benue State.

The group, in a letter of intervention written to the state government, signed by its President, Door Samuel, and Secretary General, Zuai Ephraim, said at least 40 people were killed in separate attacks carried out simultaneously on June 4 in several communities of Katsina-Ala LGA of the state.

The group called on the Federal Government to intervene, without delay, rescue the people and save them from the calamity which had befallen them.

The association said the lingering and sporadic killings, which had bedeviled the Shitile people/land in communities of Katsina-Ala and Logo LGAs of Benue State and some parts of Taraba State, had risen to an unbearable height in the past two weeks.

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“These wanton killings are now being orchestrated with reckless abandon and mostly at night. Most disturbing also is the fact that the identity of the perpetrators is hardly known, nor the reason for their actions disclosed.

“Though due to the fear of general insecurity, it is difficult to move from village to village to gather exact statistics, hordes of lives have been horrendously eliminated in several villages across the land, such that the whole land is thrown into wailing and mourning,” the president said.

In a breakdown, Door also stated that after the dust settled on the June 4 shooting by gunmen at Imande Mbakange village market in Mbacher council ward, a total of 28 people were killed after dead bodies were picked up at different points.

The group added that on the same day, in Michihe council ward, six other people were slaughtered while another six on the same night were killed at Achamegh village, Mbagene Kpav, bringing the total number of those killed to 40 in just one night.

He also lamented that three other people were badly injured during the attacks and were still receiving treatment in the hospital, adding that houses and other valuables worth millions of naira were also destroyed in the affected places.

“As these barbaric acts continue, our helpless people who escaped death are fleeing the land, deserting their homes and farmlands for safety. We observe sadly, also, that as our people are fleeing, herders are occupying these areas and grazing freely on our farms. We need help, we need security,” they appealed.