

3 killed, 5 missing as herdsmen attack Benue community

From **Scholastica Hir**, Makurdi

GUNMEN suspected to be armed herdsmen attacked the Adija community in Apa Local Government Area (LGA) of Benue State, on Easter Sunday, and killed innocent villagers.

A source, who didn't

want to be named for fear of victimisation, told Daily Sun that no fewer than five people were killed in the attack.

Speaking to newsmen on the phone, in Makurdi, yesterday, Chairman, Apa Development Association (ADA), Barr. Eche Akpoko, confirmed the attack.

He said: "Yes, it is true.

I can confirm it authoritatively, and as I speak, three dead bodies have been found so far. I describe this as a routine attack by the herders. They attacked the community and five people, all youths, are missing and as we speak, they have been able to recover three bodies, and two are yet to be found. We don't know

whether those ones were actually killed or they are just missing."

Akpoko, who described the attacks as disheartening, explained that the armed herdsmen come every now and then, attack their people and go without challenge.

"It's very alarming and the government is doing

very little about it. The thing didn't just start now, it didn't start yesterday, and the government cannot find a permanent solution to it. On daily basis, people are being killed, people are being maimed, women are being raped and children are being massacred. For how long can this continue?"

The association's chairman, who noted that the country appeared to be sliding into a state of anarchy, advised the people to prepare for self defence as 'it has become obvious that the government cannot protect or defend them'.

Akpoko visited the LG headquarters for an on-the-spot assessment. He acknowledged the efforts of members of the military, but lamented that they appeared to be overwhelmed by the situation. He lamented that almost all the villages are being attacked, adding that the soldiers are not enough to secure the entire place. He further called on the state government to open a displaced persons camp in Apa.

"There is no designated IDP camp that the government is taking care of. People are just grouping themselves, particularly those who do not have relatives that can accommodate them as they are being chased away from their villages.

"They sleep anywhere in the open space, under a tree or anywhere they can lay their heads. Our people at the LGA are helpless, no home, no food. Government should come to our aid," he said.

Bandits abduct 18 children fetching firewood in Katsina

BANDITS have abducted 18 children who were fetching firewood in Kasai community in Batsari Local Government Area (LGA) of Katsina State.

The incident was said to have occurred at about 7:30am, on Monday.

A resident of the commu-

nity, Suleiman Kasai, said the number of abductees could be higher as many children were on their way to fetch firewood when the incident happened.

Spokesperson of the Katsina Police Command, Abubakar Aliyu, who confirmed the abduction, said the police

were collaborating with other security agencies to ensure the safe return of the children.

"Eighteen children who went to get firewood were kidnapped by bandits. At the moment, we are collaborating with other security

agencies to ensure the safe return of the children and to apprehend the perpetrators. Further development will be communicated," Aliyu said.

There has been a spike in the spate of abductions for ransom in Nigeria's northern region, in recent times.

Police celebrate rescue of 28 abducted girls

From **Agaju Madugba**, Katsina

LESS than 24 hours after they were abducted by suspected terrorists, on Monday morning, the Katsina State Police Command said its men have succeeded in rescuing 28 girls from their fleeing abductors, in Batsari Local Government Area.

"The collaborative effort of

the dedicated rescue team, in conjunction with the strategic approach taken by the command, resulted in the release of all the abducted victims," the Police Public Relations Officer, ASP Abubakar Sadique Aliyu, said in a statement, yesterday.

He attributed the success to "perseverance and commitment" of the command's officers and men.

The statement reads: "On April 1, 2024, at about 1030 hrs, 28 girls who went to the outskirts of Kasai village, Batsari Local Government Area, Katsina State, with intent to fetch firewood, were abducted by kidnappers.

"Upon receipt of the report, the Commissioner of Police, Aliyu Abubakar Musa, swiftly deployed operatives to the scene, tasked with the unhurt

rescue of the victims. Thanks to the unwavering efforts and increased pressure exerted by the command, the victims, who were held against their will, have now regained freedom and are safe and sound.

"The abductors, following the escalation of pressure and the concerted actions of the command, in collaboration with all relevant security stakeholders in the state, ultimately released all the victims on the same day, at about 2240hrs. This success is a testament to the perseverance and commitment of the command as well as everyone involved in the operation. Efforts to ensure the safety and security of the community and the state will continue unabated."

Katsina has a total of 34 local government areas with Batsari as one of the 23 frontline locations where bandits hold sway, terrorising residents and abducting others for ransom.

Army confirms explosion in Ikeja Cantonment

THE Nigerian Army said a minor explosion occurred in farmland near the Mammy Market within the Ikeja Cantonment in Lagos, on Monday.

This is contained in a statement by the Director, Army Public Relations, Maj-Gen Onyema Nwachukwu, in Abuja.

Nwachukwu said the explosion was suspected to have been triggered by the burning of refuse and other inflam-

mable debris by a farmer who cultivated the farmland. He said no casualty was recorded in the incident.

"However, given that the cantonment was recently cleared and certified free of unexploded ordnances, we understand that there could be concerns among the general public as a result of the historical antecedent of explosion within the cantonment.

"The Nigerian army, therefore, wishes to assure the public that the situation is under control as its Engineers Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) team has cordoned off the area of the farmland to conduct a thorough investigation into the cause of the explosion.

"We urge residents in the general area not to panic and assure them of their safety," he said.