

# 3 killed as hunters, herdsman clash in Benue

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From **Scholastica Hir**, Makurdi

**Three persons have been reportedly killed and several others wounded as hunters and armed Fulani herdsman clashed at Okpomaju village in Okete Ward of Otukpo Local Government Area of Benue State.**

The incident occurred during a hunting expedition in the area on Monday.

Those killed included a herdsman and two hunters who hail from Otukpo.

The armed herders who were said to be relatively new in Okpomaju community were said to have opened fire on sighting the hunters, killing two of them while several others sustained injury.

The development sparked fear among the inhabitants causing residents, particularly women and their children, to flee their communities.

In Ugboju District, also in Otukpo LGA, farmers in Akpachi, Oboh and their environs have abandoned their farms for fear of being killed by herdsmen who are intimidating them with gunshots.

One of the farmers, Oga Sunday, who spoke to reporters in tears said he was chased from his farm by a herder who was carrying a gun and a machete leaving his harvested yams and other farm produce at the mercy of grazing cattle.

However, according to one of the hunters in Okpomaju, “We were out on our usual hunting exercise on Monday when we encountered a hostile group of herdsmen of Fulani origin who opened fire at us immediately they sighted us, causing fatal injuries on some of us.

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“Expectedly, we fired back and fell one of them while others started retreating.

“One of our colleagues who was hit in the belly was rushed to the Federal University of Health Sciences Teaching Hospital Otukpo for medical attention.”

When contacted, the Och’Otukpo Odu, Chief John Eimonye, confirmed the incident and said he and the leader of the herdsmen were going to meet the following day to find a solution to the crisis.

He discontenanced allegation that the herdsmen were exhibiting brazen rascality because they had bought over lands from the chiefs and locals in the area.

Chairman of Otukpo Local Government Council, Mr. Maxwell Ogiri, also confirmed the incident saying measures have been put in place to prevent recurrence.

Ogiri said they have reached resolutions between leaders of the herdsmen to fish out any erring herdsman with intent of causing mayhem.

“They promised to forge harmonious relationships with the Otukpo people because most of them were born and brought up in Otukpo.”

The Police Public Relations Officer, Benue State Command, CSP Catherine Anene, said she has to call Otukpo to get the report.