

Och'Idoma, traditional council condemn Benue killings

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From **Scholastica Hir Makurdi**

The Och'Idoma, HRM Elaigwu John, and the Idoma Traditional Council, have strongly condemned the killing of seven youths and hunters of Otukpo origin in Okpomaju village, Okete Ward, Otukpo District, Benue State.

The Och'Idoma made the condemnation in a statement signed by the Mayor of Otukpo, Chief Aloga Ignatius Ogbogo and made available to newsmen in Makurdi on Friday.

The paramount ruler of the Idoma people, described the incident as a premeditated attack, orchestrated by armed bandits with the intent to instill fear and destabilise the community.

This tragic event, he noted, mirrors similar attacks in Agatu, Guma and Gwer-West LGAs, where armed assailants have continued to threaten, displace, and murder innocent locals. He however, warned firmly that such atrocities would not be tolerated in Okpomaju or any other village in Idoma land any longer.

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Chief Ogbogo questioned the motives behind the attack, emphasising that the perpetrators could not have been local herdsmen, who, if aggrieved, would have reported any concerns to community leaders or security agencies rather than resorting to violence.

The mayor called for heightened security surveillance in Okpomaju and its neighbouring communities to ensure that the culprits are swiftly identified and brought to justice.

He further urged both the state and federal governments to establish a police post and a military unit of Operation Whirl Stroke (OPWS) in Okpomaju to curb the activities of criminal elements not only there but also in surrounding farming communities, including Odudaje, Otukpo-Icho, Emichi, Amla, and Otukpo-Nobi.

He also appealed to the state government to strictly enforce the ban on open grazing, believing that it will mitigate conflicts between herders and local farmers.

Chief Ogbogo calls on the youths of Otukpo to exercise restraint and avoid any form of reprisal attacks, assuring them that security agencies are fully committed to ensuring that justice is served.

