

moved visited the bereaved families where he ordered full scale probe into the incident, especially, alleged involvement of some soldiers, who shot and destroyed properties belonging to residents of the area, an outcome he promised to submit to the Chief of Army Staff.

He urged members of the community as well as vigilante groups in the area to be alert and work closely with the police and other security agencies through intelligence gathering to help in their quest to end terror attacks within the community and the entire state.

An eyewitness of the ugly incident, Cyril Ikhajiagbe, narrated how the herdsmen unleashed terror in the area.

He said: "It happened on Monday morning. We heard that the herdsmen had raped and killed there. When we got there, we found them dead and we saw a lot of cows. We saw our mother was stark naked, and we have never seen this sort of thing in the history of Ewu and Esan Land. Now, we are living under fear. We are sleeping with one eye open. With you here, we know we are safe".

He stated that Hausa people have been cohabiting with them peacefully for more than 30 years, adding that the attack was the handiwork of nomadic herdsmen.

He noted that the herdsmen have thrown the entire Ewu community, including some neighbouring communities, such as Irrua, into fear.

Ikhajiagbe further explained that the herdsmen initially migrated into Ewu land and settled

I can assure you that the Obaseki administration has given instruction that all schools in the state as much as we can will be fenced round so as to ward off these intruders

and tragic occurrence. This is a national problem and we have discussed it at the National Security meeting. These are not normal herdsmen – normal herdsmen don't go about armed, killing and raping. These are terrorists and we will appreciate rapid intelligence from you on their whereabouts".

He also instructed the Divisional Police Officer in the area to beef up security and that the federal and state governments were finalizing security plans, which could not be disclosed, aimed at dislodging the terrorists.

The governor further asked them to return to their farms as security had been intensified in the area and they would not be attacked in their farms anymore.

In addition, on March 16 this year, heavily armed herdsmen in the early hours of the day swooped on unsuspecting travellers along the busy Benin-Auchi-Okene highway and kidnapped some persons. During the mayhem at the popular Ogbemudia Farm at Iguevbiho village, the immediate past chairman of Etsako East Local Government Area of the state, Mr. Suleiman Afegbua, a chieftain of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) in the state was shot dead at the spot while other occupants of the vehicles trapped at the scene were also kidnapped and taken to an unknown location.

The late Afegbua was on his way to Benin when he met his sudden death.

heightened and threatened security as the herdsmen daringly converted the school premises to their abode while complaints by the indigenes and the school authority fell on deaf ears.

To add to their pains and woes of the pupils and the community, the school is bereft of adequate security and broken perimeter fence, making it easy prey for the intruders.

The chairman, State Universal Basic Education Board, (SUBEB) Mr. Suleman Ali, in a reaction said, the state government was taking measures to intervene in the security situation in some of the schools.

"There was no report as to the invasion. I would say that I am aware and you know we have salvaged a lot of schools even the neighbouring school in that community, we have intervened in the school and this very community is in our next intervention to one of those we have earmarked for intervention. Unfortunately, they live around the busy area. We have done our investigation, we have been to the community; we are even aware and we are trying to look at it in details to find out the veracity of their claims that some of the cows are owned by people within the environment. We have now detailed their youths to ensure that because they ought to have told us before now because they said they had such incidents in the past. And there was no formal report to the board even by the school author-

The command will always be on top of every situation. The promise that I made to ensure that entire citizen of the Edo State command sleep with their two eyes closed is still sacrosanct. Very recently, one late Hon Suleiman Afegbua former Etsako East Local Government chairman was ambushed and killed while two others one Musa Taibu and Jubril Abdul were abducted in the process and taken to unknown destination. Investigation reveals that the hoodlums were Fulani herdsmen. On receipt of this report, tactical teams such as Anti-Kidnapping Unit, Anti-cultism unit men from the CIID and some PFM 5 personnel were all drafted into the area to comb and search for the abducted men. I can't tell you if ransom was paid or not but all the victims of the kidnapped have been released based on pressure mounted by the police because I know a little after the incident, I mobilized all the tactical teams and they combed the bush for over 48 hours," he stated.

The list is endless. Not left out in the cries for urgent help are the Enigies in Esanland in an address delivered by the Enogie of Ekpoma, HRH Anthony Abumere on behalf of the council of Esan enigies during a reception in honour of the Benin monarch, His Royal Majesty, Omo N'Oba N'Edo Uku-Akpolokpolo, Oba Ewuare 11. They sued for the urgent intervention of the Oba in the incessant raping and killings of their subjects by Fulani herdsmen and forceful conversion of farm lands to grazing fields.