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METRO AND CRIME

Herdsman kill 13 in Nasarawa, Ber 25 villages



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By Onwuka Nzeshi, Babatope Okeowo, Cephas Iorhemen and Cheke Emmanuel [Twitter](#)



- **Female farmer attacked in Ondo**

No fewer than 12 people have been killed while about 25 villages were sacked in a fre of attacks launched by bandits suspected to be Fulani herdsman in Kadarko District, Local Government Area of Nasarawa State. Members of the Concerned Indigenous Ti of Kadarko, who disclosed this at a conference in Abuja, said the latest attacks which

January 30, were assuming a frightening dimension as the assailants were only going people of the Tiv ethnic stock.

This came as suspected armed Fulani at the weekend killed a prominent Igbo trader in Logo Local Government Area of the Benue State. Also, a suspected Fulani man at the weekend attacked and injured a farmer, Mrs. Florence Godday, in her farm at Igbo Abasi in Akure North Local Government Area of Ondo State. Leader of the Concerned Tiv People of Kadarko, Dr Benjamin Agbede, disclosed that apart from the 12 people killed, over 30 others had been wounded and were receiving treatment in different hospitals.

He disclosed that the breakdown of law and order had forced many of the people residing in the troubled spots to flee to safer communities. Agbede regretted that despite the killing, maiming and burning of people's homes by the herdsmen, there had been no appropriate response from the Nasarawa State government and the various security agencies deployed to protect lives and property. According to him, most of the communities attacked were occupied by the indigenous Tiv people who are mostly farmers. He gave the names of the sacked communities as Azer, Tamen, Bature, Agbara, Peter Agbede, Nguchi, Igbacha, Gidan Sule and Ngur. Others are Nyam Adaga, Cha, Tseiyo, Ahima, Mori, Kpilaio, Chikocha, Chia, Anisa, Dooga, Mbamar, Rest House, Anom, Cha Utsaha and Ikpe. Agbede, who was flanked at the press conference by other leaders of Tiv community, alleged that the recent attacks whereby the terrorists targeted one ethnic group, smacked of ethnic cleansing.

He said: "We are deeply worried that the area is also inhabited by other ethnic nations like Alago, Eggon, Hausa, Igbo and others but it was only the Tiv people that were the target of the terrorists. This could be a plot to exterminate the indigenous Tiv people in Nasarawa State.

"We are also bothered that though the police were quickly informed when the terrorists launched their attack about 1a.m. on the 30th of January, 2018, there was no swift response from them." In the Benue attack, many people were injured while scores fled their homes.

The victim, identified as Mr. Abushi, was murdered on Gbeji Road while returning from market when he ran into the invaders who opened fire at him and killed him instantly. He said the victim's body was recovered by mobile policemen during a routine operation in Ayoo at Udu and deposited at the NKST Hospital morgue in Anyiin. A resident of the area, Chief Joseph Anawa, said thousands of armed Fulani mercenaries yesterday made free

incursion into seven council wards of Mbalagh in Makurdi Local Government Area such as Taki, Anter, Nyijir and Tatyough as well as Ikyaior, Tse Ibume and Tse Keereke in Guri Local Government Area. The state Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Moses Yar, said he did not pick his calls at the time of filing this report.

Governor Samuel Ortom also at the weekend took a swipe at the Inspector General of Police Ibrahim Idris over his comments on the ongoing skirmishes between Fulani herdsman and crop farmers in the state. In the Ondo State attack, the 28-year-old Florence said she was working alone in her farm and was about to leave after the day's work when the herdsmen struck.

The victim said she decided to fetch firewood after working on her cassava farm when she noticed the suspect and decided to leave immediately. Florence added that she packed the firewood together and planned to leave the farm because she was scared of the Fulani man. She said: "I was about going home when I noticed the Fulani man in my farm. I was scared and greeted him and he replied. I sought his assistance in putting the firewood on my head and he obliged. But before I could thank him, he attacked me with his machete in the head. I could not question him or know what was happening, he gagged me and tore my clothes."

That was when I raised the alarm. He suspected the noise could attract other farmers and he took to his heels, with his blood stained clothes." Florence explained that she managed to get to the nearest community where she was offered another clothes. She added: "I was weak and unable to walk again because I have lost so much blood but they helped me to the hospital where I was treated. "I can't really explain the motive behind the attack by the man, maybe to kill me or to rape me but he removed my wrapper and clothes before I could raise the alarm after."

The state Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Mr. Femi Joseph, said the suspect has been arrested but granted bail while investigation had begun into the matter. Joseph disclosed that the man was a scavenger and met the woman in her farm and attempted to sexually assault her but he injured her in the process.

He said: "The suspect is not a Fulani man but speaks Hausa; he is from Langtang in Fako Local Government Area of Cross River State but not a Fulani herdsman as claimed by the people. He has been granted bail and is to come back to the station today (Monday), while investigation is ongoing. He will be charged with rape and assault."