

# Herdsman murder five farmers in Benue community



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## ...court denies bail to six herders

Herdsman believed to be of Fulani extraction yesterday killed five persons at Umenger community at Governor Samuel Ortom's village in Guma Local Government Area of Benue State. It was learnt that the farmers were killed on Sunday night, while scores of others were rendered homeless.

This came as least a Makurdi Chief Magistrate's Court yesterday denied bail to six herdsman, apprehended by security operatives in connection with the New Year attack and killing of scores of people in five villages in

## Guma and Logo local government areas of Benue State.

Sources from Umenger told said the herdsman invaded the area when the villagers had gone back to check the rubble of their houses razed by the herders to see whether they could rebuild them and return home.

A survivor told our correspondent that the herdsman had laid ambush for them and as soon as they were approaching the village, the assailants Ortom's Security Adviser, Col. Paul Hemba (rtd), confirmed the incident.

Hemba said two persons, a man and a woman, were killed, adding that the invaders had taken over the whole village after forcibly ejecting the locals. He said the invaders had camped on a hill where they monitored anyone coming into the village. According to him, the herdsman saw three villagers coming on a motorcycle and opened fire on them, killing two on the spot while the third managed to escape.

Meanwhile, the accused, Ibrahim Saleh, Jibrin Adamu, Magaji Yau, Ibrahim Abubakar, Useni Bala, Sabin Yau, are facing charges of culpable homicide, criminal

conspiracy, mischief by fire, grievous hurt and violation of the prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law 2017.

The herders were also arraigned for openly rearing their cattle within farmlands at Akor village in Guma Local Government Area which contravenes Sections 97, 329, 333 and 222 of the Penal Code Law of the state and Section 19(2) (3) of the Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law of Benue State 2017.

They were first arraigned on January 5 before Chief Magistrate Isaac Ajim, who ordered that the accused be remanded in Makurdi Medium Prison till yesterday. When the case came up for mention, no plea was taken for want of jurisdiction.

This was as the principal state counsel, Mrs. M. N. Abenga, from the state Ministry of Justice, formally applied to take over the motions from the initial prosecution counsel, ASP Edward Imoh, and the substantive case.

Abenga also filed another application urging the court not to grant bail to the accused pending the determination of the substantive suit and sought an adjournment to enable the ministry to conclude on its legal advice.

Counsel to the defendants, Al-Mustapha Elegu, did not oppose the application which was granted by the chief magistrate, Ajim, who presided over the case.