



METRO AND CRIME

Herdsman kill six children, 19 othe Benue



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By **Cephas Iorhemen**



...kidnap pregnant woman

- **Six murdered in cult war**
- **50 houses razed, scores injured**

It was another black Sunday in Benue State yesterday as at least 31 people were killed in separate attacks in different communities. First, herdsman, believed to be of Fulani e

armed with sophisticated weapons invaded Tse-Adough, a village at Mbachom in Yaa Kwande Local Government Area of Benue State and killed six children and 13 others.

The children were mostly of school age who were burnt inside their house. Also, a pregnant woman and a man were reportedly taken into captivity. The herders, who invaded the deserted communities in the early hours of Sunday, also burnt down over 50 houses and injured scores of others. Similarly, six persons were also killed when rival cult groups met in Otukpo, headquarters of Otukpo Local Government Area.

But witnesses from Kwande said at the time of filing the report that people within the area were still searching the bush to recover more bodies, while those who sustained varying degrees of injury, including the deceased, were taken to the hospital in Jato- Aka, the traditional homestead of second Republic Minister of Steel, Chief Paul Unongo.

The Chairman of Kwande Local Government Area, Mr. Terdoo Nyor Kenti, who confirmed the gruesome attack, said the armed men stormed the village about midnight while the people were asleep and were shooting sporadically in all directions. According to him, seven persons were murdered on the spot, many others injured, six children burnt while a pregnant woman was taken into captivity.

He said: “We gathered that the attack, which occurred in the early hours of Sunday, has left villagers moving out of the area and surrounding villages in droves for fear of another attack by the attackers.

“There was no prior problem between the villagers and the Fulani herdsmen, but I wonder why the attackers would just come and swoop on the people without any provocation.

Efforts to get the reaction of the state Commissioner of Police, Fatai Owoseni, failed as he did not pick his calls at the time of filing this report. It was learnt that two of the cult victims were killed at a popular drug (marijuana) joint known as “Banana Island” while another victim owned a barber shop at Akpa Street was shot outside his shop.

The fourth victim was killed along Uloko lane and others at several other locations as the killers went about their killing spree. The development, it was learnt, sent jitters down the spines of Otukpo residents who were running helter-skelter.

The local government Chairman, Mr. George Alli, who confirmed the development on phone, said efforts were on to apprehend the perpetrators of the heinous crime.

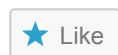
He said: “We have confirmed the death of six persons this afternoon (yesterday). I’m expecting a clearer picture about this because they are going to come with a special squad to go after them.”

Alli said the killers immediately went into hiding after the dastardly act. He, however, declined to comment further on the matter as he said it bordered on the security of the local government area.

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