

Militants kill five farmers in Benue village



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Suspected Jukun militants, believed to be from neighbouring Taraba State, have launched a fresh attack on Gyenku, a densely populated village in Ukum Local Government Area of Benue State, leaving at least five people dead.

The invaders made incursion into the community about 8a.m. on Wednesday, and opened fire on the victims. The attack came while the victims were working on their farms. It was learnt that scores of residents, including women and children, deserted their homes and took refuge in nearby settlements.

The Transition Committee Chairman of the local government, Mr. Tor-Ityokaa Ibellogo, confirmed the attack, adding that a woman, who was severely injured, was rushed to an undisclosed hospital, where she was currently receiving treatment.

He added: "The victims were murdered on their individual farms. In fact, the assassins had a mission; they came to kill my people and left after achieving that."

The killings came barely a week after Operation Whirl-Stroke (OPWS) of the Nigerian Army led by its Commander, Major General Adeyemi Yekini, held a peace meeting with the warring factions at Kente in neighbouring Taraba State, during which a peace agreement

was signed to end conflict.

Other sources claimed that 11 people were killed and more than 34 houses set ablaze by the marauding killers. The sources said the invaders also attacked Tse-Chia village, also in Ukum.

The Benue State Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), DSP Sewuese Anene, said she had no details yet on the incident, as all her efforts to obtain facts from the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) and the Police Area Commander in the area were abortive.

Benue and Taraba state governments had inaugurated a 10-man Peace Committee, set up during the Joint Security Council meeting of the two states, with a charge to do all that was necessary to bring the persistent inter-communal clashes to an end.

The Benue State Deputy Governor, Benson Abounu, who inaugurated the committee alongside his Taraba State counterpart, Haruna Manu, at the Federal University, Wukari, recently, tasked the members to be fair-minded in carrying out their assignment of unearthing the remote and immediate causes of the lingering crisis. The committee was also charged to ensure that no effort was spared to ensure that lasting peace returns to the area.

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