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Herders sack Ebonyi-Benue border communities, kill 30, raze houses

Uchenna Inya and Kenneth **Ofoma**

rmed men vesterday murdered about 30 people in three communities in Ebonyi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.

This was as gunmen also killed four people at Mghuji Ehamufu community in Isi-Uzo Local Government Area of Enugu State.

The affected three communities in Ebonyi State - Nd<u>iobasi, Odoke</u> and Obakotara - have common boundaries with Ardo Local Government Area of Benue State.

The gunmen, who residents described as herdsmen, invaded the communities from Benue State at

Many people were attacked with machetes and were currently receiving treatment at the Federal University Teaching Hospital Abakaliki 2 (FETHA) and a health centre close to the scene of the incidents, AMURT.

AMURT made a post through its social media handle on the matter. It reads: "Terrible scenes at Oha-

gelode Health Centre this morning. An attack on an Izzi village inside Benue State, allegedly by herdsmen, resulted in many casualties. Many were carried all the way to Ohagelode Health Centre.

The Uloanwu Ambulance was called and 11, six adults and five children, were transported to AE-FUTHA in Abakaliki. Sadly two children already died after reach-ing AEFUTHA. An AMURT team of doctors, led by Dr. Omogo, the MD of AMURT, has rushed to Ohagelode. We are trying to support the wounded carried to AEFUTHA.

...murder four in Enugu









Some of the victims

A resident of one of the communities, Uchenna Okpokwu, told the New Telegraph that "30 people were slaughtered in Ndiobasi by the herdsmen

He said: Herdsmen invaded our place vesterday night with guns and machetes. They came into Ndiobasi community and started slaughtering the people. After slaughtering them, they entered Odoke, from that Odoke, they went to Obakotara.

"Currently, people that were slaughtered in Ndiobasi are up to 30, according to the video clips on the incident, but Odoke and Obapta are very far and nobody was able to enter those two villages to capture those that were killed.

"When I received call from one of my villagers over the attack, he told me that the herdsmen are currently at Ojaba forest and that place is their hideout because there is no other way for them to escape. The herdsmen were in that forest as at the time I was called on phone.

"I was told our local government chairman went with some security men but couldn't get to the affected villages. If there is a way security agents will be sent to the affected villages, it will be good. Currently, I have been trying to reach my family members on the phone but their lines are not through and all of them are in the village.

A man, who gave his name simply as Onyibe, alleged that a man in Enugu saw the herdsmen go into the affected villages with dangerous weapons and made a voice call,

alerting the public. He said: "One young man from Enugu State that saw the herdsmen when they were coming into the Ebonyi villages made the voice call that went viral to alert the state but it appears that it was ignored which was why these attacks were recorded despite the alert. Nobody took that voice seriously and the herdsmen came and killed not less than 30 people now. They are currently at-

tacking more villages "Three communities and five villages for now were affected. They include Odoke community, Ndiobasi and Obakotara. As we are talking now, they are still killing people and are destroying properties.

The Ebomyi Local Government Area Chairman, Mrs. Chinyere wogbaga, confirmed the incident.

Nwogbaga said the affected villages and communities are in Ardo Local Government Area, Benue State but that the residents are the

people of Ebonyi State, Izzi people. She said: "The people occupying that place are the people of Ebonyi State, Izzi precisely. But the villages in question are located inside Ardo Local Government in Benue State, they are all in Benue State, not in Ebonyi State but we are sharing a common boundary between the Benue and Ebonyi and the people living in that particular place are the Izzi people.

"This is why we have to take proactive action by rescuing lives because they are our people. Though so many lives have been lost and properties burnt, the Governor (Dave Umahi) directed that we should bring the victims since they are the people from Ebonyi State. He said we should bring them to FETHA 2 for free medical treatment with some relief materials given to

Ebonyi State government has beefed up security in Izzi and Ebonyi local government areas following killings in the three border communities

The state Commissioner for Internal Security and Border Peace, Stanley Okoro Emegha, disclosed this in a statement in Abakaliki.

Emegha said the measure was to forestall possible spill over of the at-tack to neighbouring villages in Izzi and Ebonyi local government areas.

He said: "The Ebonyi State government has observed with dismay the invasion of Nwori Ndi-Obasi village in Ado Local Government Area of Benue State in the early hours of today, Sunday, 30th May, 2021. The unfortunate incident was perpetrated by suspected herders who ruthlessly attacked unsuspecting inhabitants of the village killing, maiming and had burnt down several houses.

The concern of the state government is, however, heightened against the backdrop that the victims of the attack in the affected village are predominantly made up of people of Izzi extraction in Izzi Local Government Area who are indigenes of

Benue State.
"To forestall possible spill-over of the attack to the neighbouring villages of Okwofuruike, Odoke and Ohabuleodo respectively, in Izzi and Ebonyi local government areas, Ebonyi State government ef-fectively mobilised and dispatched a combined team of security agencies and members of Ebubeagu Security Outfit to ensure that peace and normalcy is restored in the area.'

Meanwhile, tension enveloped Mgbuji Ehamufu community in Isi-Uzo Local Government Area of Enugu State at the weekend, following the invasion and slaughtering of four members of the community by suspected herdsmen.

Sources said the victims were killed in the early hours of Friday although some people put the casualty figure at nine.

Trouble started when the herders were stopped from cutting down an economic tree to feed their cattle.

Sources told journalists that the interruption led to heated argument between the community members and the herders.

It was learnt that the community members succeeded in pursuing the herders and their cattle from further destruction of the economic tree. However, the herders later re-

grouped and attacked the communify killing about four people.

Sources said that the herders later escaped with their animals.

The state Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), DSP Daniel Ndukwe, told journalists that the state Commissioner of Police, Mohammed Ndatsu Aliyu, had already ordered discreet investigation to unravel the cause of the attack and apprehend the culprits.

He said: "The commissioner has ordered the intensification of al-ready launched discreet investigation to unravel the mystery behind their death as well as identify and arrest the assailants.

Gunmen kill pregnant woman in Nasarawa

Cheke Emmanuel LAFIA

unmen have killed a pregnant woman at Abebe village in Agaza District of Keana Lo cal Government Area of Nasarawa

Abebe, the hometown of the leader of the Tiv people of Nasarawa State and President of the Tiv Development Association (TIDA), Comrade Peter Ahema, was attacked midnight on Saturday leading to the displacement of inhabitants of the community and neighbouring vil-

The attackers, armed with sophisticated weapons, opened fire on the villagers and caused pandemonium as men, women and children scampered for safety.

Ahemba alleged that the attacks and killing of Tiv people of Nasarawa State in the last two months were



targeted at chasing them out of the state by some forces

He reiterated his appeal to Governor Abdullahi Sule not to allow the planned annihilation of the Tiv people succeed under his watch as the chief security officer of Nasarawa State.

Ahema condemned the killings and destruction of the Tiv people and urged any group or any ethnic nationality with grievances against the Tiv people to involve civilised ways of addressing the issues rather than take undue advantage of the insecurity in the southern part of the state to achieve an agenda detrimental to the unity, peace and security of the state.

He said: "His Excellency, Governor Abdullahi Sule, means well for the state. He is doing his best to protect lives and property of the citizens but it appears some people are bent on sabotaging his efforts.

"He is a man of peace and we trust he will not succumb to the pressure to allow the annihilation of the Tiv people under his watch.

The Tiv leader alleged that the Abebe village had been under threats of attack by some farmers of Alago extraction from Obi town in Obi Local Government Area of the state whose efforts to forcibly takeover some hectares of farmland belonging to the Tiv farmers of the community had met stiff resistance.