

Ebonyi-Benue border attack death toll rises to 52

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Death toll in the attack on three communities on Ebonyi-Benue border by herdsmen has risen to 52.

Armed herdsmen invaded Odoke Ishieke, Obakota Ishieke and Ndiobasi Ishieke communities all in Ebonyi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State at 3am on Sunday and killed over 30 people, including pregnant women and nursing mothers.

The three communities share common boundaries with Ardo Local Government Area of Benue State.

Since the invasion, security agents have been recovering bodies of victims from bushes in the affected communities.

A resident of one of the affected communities, who gave his name simply as Nwegede, told our correspondent that 31 bodies were received in Ndiobasi Ishieke, six in Odoke Ishieke and 15 in Obakota Ishieke.

He said: "Herdsmen butchered Izzi people at Nwori Ndiobashi side. Most of the victims are at Sudan Hospital, Onuenyimu, right now battling machete and gunshot injuries."

Meanwhile, many victims of the attack were still receiving treatment at the Federal University Teaching Hospital Abakaliki 2 (FETHA2) and a health centre close to the scene of the incidents, AMURT.

The Commissioner for Capital City Development, Chief Onyekachi Nwebonyi, told the *New Telegraph* that over 30 bodies had been evacuated from bushes around the affected communities while soldiers were still recovering more bodies from



One of the victims

the bushes.

Nwebonyi, who is also a stakeholder in the affected communities, said the panic-stricken residents were in disarray.

He said: "It is a very unfortunate situation. We got a very sad news yesterday morning that armed herdsmen invaded Izzi land partic-

ularly in a place called Ndiobashi and killed so many of our people. We quickly alerted the security agencies to come to their aid but unfortunately, the Benue State government, who claimed ownership of the area, could not respond positively.

"But we commend the Governor of Ebonyi State, who upon hearing the incident, swung into action even though the land is in dispute and sent the security agencies to repel the attacks. As I speak with you, over 30 bodies have been evacuated and as I talk, the soldiers are still evacuating more dead bodies in the bush.

"I visited there yesterday (on Sunday) and the victims narrated their ordeal. But of a truth, the area is in disarray. People are in panic but we have been able to encourage them to complement the efforts of the security agencies to beef up security in the area so that the ugly incident doesn't reoccur."

Gunmen kill ex-Enugu High Court

Gunmen on Sunday shot dead a former judge of the High Court of Enugu State, Justice Stanley Nnaji.

The retired judge was killed in the Enugu metropolis along Okpara Avenue-Ebeano Tunnel Junction around 5pm.

A video circulating on social media shows how the gunmen dragged Nnaji out of his car and pumped a volley of bullets into his body from what appeared to be an AK47 rifle.

The assailants thereafter drove off in a Mercedes Benz jeep belonging to the victim.

In a statement, the state Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), ASP Daniel Ndukwe, promised Nnaji's killers would be brought to book

Ndukwe said the command had launched an investigation into the killing.

The PPRO said the Commissioner of Police, Mohammed Ndatsu Aliyu, had ordered the launch of a full-scale manhunt of yet-to-be identified armed assailants, alleged to have trailed and shot dead the retired judge driving in a Mercedes Benz Jeep, which they stole, along Ebeano Tunnel, Enugu, about 5pm on Sunday.

He said: "The victim was rushed to the hospital, where he was confirmed dead by doctors on duty and deposited in the mortuary for autopsy."

Meanwhile, the Police Commissioner, Aliyu promised that no stone would be left unturned in fishing out