

Gunmen kill 19 people in Benue

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It was a bloody weekend for the people of Katsina-Ala and Ado local government areas of Benue State as gunmen invaded their communities leaving at least 19 people dead.

The invaders also made incursion into Saint John's Little Angel's Nursery and Primary School in Ichama Centre in Okpokwu Local Government Area and reportedly kidnapped a Reverend Sister, identified as Rev. Sister Blessing.

Also on Sunday morning, the police said they had killed 14 bandits who had attacked a police station in an attempt to free some detainees.

A source from the town who simply identified himself as Kajo said that the bandits numbering about 50 had driven in Toyota Corolla vehicles popularly known as 'duck nyash' to the police station.

It was reliably learnt that the police engaged the bandits in a gun duel leading to the death of 14 of the attackers.

1 *New Telegraph* learnt that in Kastina-Ala Local Government Area, the gunmen attacked Tor-Donga community where they reportedly killed nine people; while in Ado 10 people were

killed through an age-long communal discord, bringing the total casualty figures from the twin incidents to 19.

New Telegraph reliably learnt that Reverend Sister Blessing was abducted alongside a student of Ichama Community Secondary School in Okpoga, headquarters of Okpokwu Local Government Area.

The abductors, who were reported to be armed herdsmen, were said to have stormed Ichama community and started shooting sporadically to frighten the villagers during the operation.

A source from the village, who pleaded anonymity, hinted that there was tension in the community as a result of the abduction of the Rev. Sister and the said student.

The source said the suspected kidnappers who "were speaking in Fulani dialect, Fulfude, "were shooting sporadically to scare the village youths away from nearing their vehicle in which booth their victims, Rev. Sister Blessing and a yet to be identified student of Ichama Community Secondary School were kept."

Chairman of Ado Local Government, Hon. James Oche, confirmed the killing of 10 people in his domain in a communal strife with neighbouring Ebonyi State.