



News

Uproar As Herders Turn Isi-Uzo Communities Into Killing Fields

📅 December 29, 2022 👤 Kenneth Ofoma 💬 Comments Off

OutcryF

or the umpteenth time, killer herdersmen on December 18, invaded a community in Isi-Uzo local government area of Enugu state. No less than 20 persons were allegedly killed in the troubled Ebor, Eha-Amufu community. Security sources told our correspondent that the invaders, who outnumbered the soldiers and local vigilantes, launched the attack early Sunday morning. "From the report I received, the armed herdersmen and their collaborators from Benue State communities launched the attack around 5:30 am to 6 am this Sunday morning. Before we got there, several people had been killed. "We are just a few soldiers here and where we are based is a little bit far from the community. There are no other security operatives from other security agencies here in Eha-Amufu helping except the local vigilantes. They (vigilantes) first engaged them but the invading armed herdersmen outnumbered them," a security source said.

Fear grips communities

A community leader, who gave his name as Ogbuabor Samuel, confirmed the attack. "As I speak to you, the invading armed herdersmen are still shooting. Several people have been killed; at least we have recovered the bodies of 10 people." The latest attack is coming despite repeated assurances by Governor Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi and security chiefs that they will stop the carnage. They gave assurances during their visit after a similar massacre of the people on November 22, 2022. In that attack, more than 10 persons were killed and many wounded and houses set ablaze. The community blames the government including the local



facts of what is happening in our community. He is not supporting the local vigilantes and other local security.

Security boost

“A few weeks ago, he dissolved all the local vigilantes formed by Eha-Amufu communities yet he hardly visits the affected communities. We need the government to declare a security emergency in Eha-Amufu, especially in Ebor, Umujiovu, Mgbuji and Agu-Amede communities. Governor Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi should do something drastic. His government should stop politicising the situation in our place. “Agala people in Benue State have joined forces with armed herdsman attacking and killing our people every day. “They have sacked several villages and occupied them. They have destroyed our people’s livelihood. Properties worth millions have been destroyed and those in political positions in Enugu State are playing politics with it?”

Recent attacks

“Since these recent attacks started in October, we haven’t seen policemen. You can only see police if their commissioner is coming to witness the destruction. And when the commissioner goes back to Enugu, he starts dishing out false narratives. Where are the tactical squad and operational assets of the police he told Nigerians through the media that he had deployed to Eha-Amufu? “We want to know whose interest the security agencies in Enugu State are protecting. The invading armed herdsman? Could it be that the security chiefs in Enugu State are in the state to give cover to armed herdsman?” a member of the community lamented. Recall that the last attack on Ebor and Umujiovu communities on December 8, 2022, reportedly claimed 25 lives but the Enugu State Police Command told the media that only four people were killed.

Residents-turned-refugees

Thousands of indigenes of Ehamufu and other communities in the area have been displaced as they fled their ancestral homes for dear lives. Many of them ran to neighbouring communities in Ebonyi State and some to the Enugu capital; while others have been forced into Internally Displaced Persons’ abodes.

Attacks on residents

Attacks on Isi-Uzor communities have become so frequent that many people have lost count. Despite the fact that Enugu hosts the headquarters of 82 Division Nigerian Army which covers South East, South South and Benue, the security situation in Enugu state has been deplorable over the years. The State Governor, Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi appears to be helpless and abandoned by the security agencies in the state. Security meetings upon security meetings have failed to stem the tide. Ugwuanyi’s first baptism of fire was in 2016 when more than 20 persons were massacred by herders at Ukpabi Nimbo in Uzor-Uwani local government area of the state. Ugwuanyi broke into tears when he visited the scene. Ever since, the killings have spread to other communities and local government areas in the state. Aside the herders, the state still had to contend with assassination cases, kidnapping, burning and destruction of facilities belonging to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and killings by unknown gunmen. The Sunday attack was the latest massacre in Eha-Amufu, Isi- Uzo LGA of Enugu State. Many concerned citizens of the state have not spared Gov Ugwuanyi for his alleged inability to bring the killings under control.

Ordeal

One Chinedu Jidefo-Ogbuagu said, “... you are Governor and Chief Security Officer. This one happened yesterday Sunday, 18th December 2022. Before yesterday’s incident, there had been several other attacks by the same known terrorists in the same Eha-Amufu. Do the massacres in Eha-Amufu not remind you of the 2016 masunemployed sacre in Nimbo, Uzo Uwani LGA (over 50 Enugu State indigenes killed), the primary reason why you and I parted ways.

“It is a shame that you have not resigned from office over these massacres of Enugu State indigenes, including those of your Orba, Udenu LGA backyard.” Similarly, the guber candidate of the All Progressive Grand Alliance, APGA in Enugu State, Frank Nweke Jr has questioned the use of billions of Naira received as security votes by the incumbent government in the state. Nweke, who made his views known through a press statement made available to journalists, December 19, 2022, expressed dissatisfaction with the fact that Enugu state residents are living in fear.



The statement reads: “The first duty of government is the security of its people. However, in Enugu State, we are witnessing a consistent breakdown in law and order, with residents living in fear and constant apprehension”. “The PDP-led administration receives billions annually as Security Vote for funding security services in the State.

Yet, non-state actors seem to have overrun our cities and communities, while the government keeps mum as residents are killed or sacked from their homes in Eha-Amufu, Ibagwa- Aka, Adani, Achi, and many others in several local government areas across the State.

I commiserate with these communities and the families who have lost loved ones and pray that the good Lord will rest their souls”. “The prevalent insecurity is symptomatic of the abysmal failure of leadership in many respects, including the poor economic conditions our people have found themselves, impoverished unemployed, and fighting to survive”. Inter Society reacts International Society for Civil Liberties and Rule of Law (Intersociety), a civic organisation, has condemned the incessant attacks by armed herdsmen in Enugu State communities while according to the group, the Nigerian security agencies look the other way.

The group in statement issued on Thursday, November 24, after the earlier massacre on November 22, titled “Enugu Under Siege By Jihadist Herdsmen As Army’s ‘Operation Golden Dawn’ Goes Deaf And Dumb,” called on the governors of old Eastern region to go for 60% Security Chiefs from the East and immediate ensure transfer of no fewer than 20 senior military and police commanders of Muslim extraction and other disproportionately deployed senior officers of non-Eastern origin. Intersociety in the statement signed by its principal officers – Emeka Umeagbalasi, Obianuju Joy Igboeli, Chidinma Udegbumam, insisted that the 11 governors of Edo, Delta, Anambra, Enugu, Ebonyi, Imo, Abia, Rivers, Akwa Ibom, Cross River and Bayelsa must urgently ensure ethno-religious de-radicalisation of the safety and security in the East and giving the Eastern population a true sense of belonging including “security and safety with local contents.”

Way forward

According to the group, “the principal officers of the Nigerian Army responsible for the Army’s touted “Operation Golden Dawn” in the Southeast part of Eastern Nigeria have become totally deaf and dumb as Enugu goes up in flames ignited by Jihadist... Herdsmen.

“As a matter of fact, “Enugu State is no longer in the Hands of God”. The state, especially communities surrounding the State’s ancient Capital City have come under heavy and unchecked jihadist invasions by the Jihadist ... Herdsmen. “The invasions of the Capital of Eastern Nigeria; also the Christian Capital of the East are coming few months after it was trended and widely streamed in the social media by some locals that “they saw a strange security helicopter dropping weapons of death to a group of persons with unknown tribal identities”, an allegation controversially dismissed by security and political establishments in the State.

“This is to the extent that several key and heavily motorised inter-state and federal roads and communal bypasses have become no-go areas and death-traps. For two weeks, the ‘Four-Corner’ part of Enugu-Port Harcourt Expressway, Ugwuogo-Nike-Opi Nsukka part of Enugu, Nsude part of Old Enugu-Onitsha Road and Eke- Ezeagu axis, among others have come under severe invasions and attacks by Jihadist ... Herdsmen”.

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