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Benue: Villagers flee as invading herdsmen kill 23 in fresh Benue attacks

Gunmen, suspected to be Fulani herdsmen, attacked Iye and Kpete villages in the Guma and Apa Local Government Areas of Benue State at the weekend killing at least 23 farmers, with scores wounded.

The attacks came hours after terrorists had invaded Akpete village in the Apa LGA, killing six people.

Unconfirmed reports said four soldiers were also killed.

The communities are reportedly deserted following the attacks as residents have fled for their lives. Many homes were said to have been burned by the

... Police rescue 8-month-old baby, mother, medical doctor, 8 others

hoodlums.

New Telegraph learned that 17 people were massacred in Guma and six others in Apa in the attacks that took place on Saturday and Sunday.

Sources said the herdsmen invaded Iye at about 5pm on Sunday and opened fire on residents.

Some residents of the councils, Jonah Iorundu and Onyale Joseph, said the attacks were unprovoked.

The Commissioner of Police, Julius Okoro, who confirmed the killings, said one of the gunmen was killed by police who confronted the hoodlums and repelled them.

He said: "Seven corpses, including that one of the attackers in Guma, have been recovered."

Meanwhile, the Benue State Police Command yesterday said it rescued 10 kidnapped victims including an eight-month-old baby, the mother as well as a Medical Doctor with the Federal Medical Center (FMC), Makurdi and seven others from their captors.

The Command also paraded suspected criminals for committing various crimes.

The rescued victims were abducted at different locations and taken to the kidnappers hideout at Gaya Village in Utange council ward in Kastina Ala Local Government Area of the state where they were trailed to by a team of Opera-

tion Zenda Joint Task Force (JTF) and rescued.

Briefing journalists during a parade of the suspects at the command's headquarters in Makurdi, CP Okoro Alawari Julius said that the kidnappers, "on sighting the police, engaged them in a gun duel that claimed the life of one of the kidnappers; three suspects were arrested while others escaped into a nearby bush with bullets wounds. Ten kidnap victims including the doctor were rescued unhurt."

He said, items recovered from them include; one locally fabricated AK47 rifle with 10 rounds of 7.62mm live ammunition, two single barrel rifles, one locally made barretta pistol loaded with three (3) rounds of .9mm live ammunition and two military uniforms, adding that investigation was ongoing.

The CP said his men also foiled a kidnap attempt by some

gunmen that accosted a vehicle conveying passengers to Enugu at Daudu area of the state with intent to move them to an unknown destination and request for ransom.

He disclosed that the abductors, on sighting the police abandoned the victims and a bag containing military camouflage uniforms and wooden guns and took to their heels, adding that the victims had since been released to continue their journey, while investigation is ongoing to arrest suspects at large.

He also paraded six suspected cultists that reportedly killed one Babatunde Moses, 29, in Otukpo Local Government Area and dumped his corpse at Edikwu River bank with internal organs mutilated.

CP Alawari assured people of the state of his commitment to ensuring that the people sleep with their eyes closed and rid the state of criminality including the perennial herdsmen and farmers crisis.

