

# Again, herdsmen overrun Benue LG

Cephas Iorhemen

**A**ll the attacks on farmers by armed herdsmen terrorists in Benue State have continued unabated, the bandits have reportedly overrun the greater part of the Gwer-West Local Government Area of Benue State leaving all communities desolate, the Forum of Tyoshin Academics (FoTA) alleged at the weekend.

In one of the attacks, the insurgents amputated the hands of two farmers and killed three others while scores deserted their communities.

National President of FoTA, Prof. Patrick Ukase and National Publicity Secretary, Prof. John Ajai, in a statement confirmed said fleeing victims have left their villages empty with their farms taken over by the invaders while those who attempt to return are killed.

The FoTA was reacting to claims by the Technical Adviser to Governor Hyacinth Alia on Media, Publicity, and Strategic Communication, Mr. Solomon Iorpev, that there is relative peace in the local government and that residents who were earlier displaced had returned to their homes.

The group said the claim by the governor's aid that displaced people have returned in eight council wards he could not even mention, "is not just misleading, it is completely false."

"The truth is that displaced people have not returned to five council wards. Every credible report from the ground confirms that armed herders have overrun much of Gwer-West, leaving entire communities desolate. The villages are empty, farms have been taken over, and those who attempt to return face certain death.

"The Gyaluwa area, which had never before experienced Fulani attacks, has now been overrun. Armed herders have attacked Sengey/Yengev and Tsambe/Mbesev, forcing entire communities to flee.

"At Tse-Gyuche, two farmers had their hands amputated by herders who were feeding their cattle with the farmers' cassava. Around the same time, two innocent people were brutally murdered at Tse-Kperiyisa. In Kyaghev ward, another person was killed at Tse-Torleke. Entire villages in these areas now lie in ruins as their

people seek refuge in Naka, the only place where some safety still exists.

"For clarity, let us set the record straight: Many communities in Gwer-West LGA remain completely abandoned. Families have been forced to flee from Sengey, Gaambe-Ushin, Mbachohon, Mba-buande, Tyoughate/Njaha, Mbapa, Saghev-Ukusu, and Nyamshi. Their homes are empty, their lands have been occupied, and their futures are uncertain.

"In Merkyen, Tsambe/Mbesev, and Sengey/Yengev, only a handful of areas remain habitable. Most villages have been reduced to ghost towns.

## Onyema hails Ekiti Airport as one of world's best

**T**he Chief Executive Officer of Air Peace Limited, Dr Allen Onyema, has lauded the state-of-the-art facilities and operational efficiency of the Ekiti State Agro Allied International Cargo Airport, describing it as one of the best in the world.

Dr Onyema, who landed at the airport on Saturday at about 10am in a Boeing 737, (120 capacity) aircraft, commended the airport's apron, runway, and ter-

minal building, describing them as "highly functional and aesthetically pleasing".

Speaking with journalists shortly after landing at the airport, the Air Peace Boss noted that the facility's readiness for international and domestic flights positions it as a critical infrastructure for the economic and social development of the state and the country at large.

Emphasizing the potentials of the airport, which

according to him makes it a strong contender for major aviation activities in Nigeria, Dr Onyema said it is equipped to accommodate even larger aircraft such as Boeing 777.

While assuring the state of his readiness to partner with the airport as soon as it commences commercial operations, Dr Onyema expressed optimism that the airport would soon serve as a hub for pilgrims and travelers in the country.