

Herdsmen Strike Near Makurdi Township, Kill 15 Farmers, Several Missing



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The much-talked-about relative peace in Benue State was shattered yet again Wednesday night when suspected Fulani herdsmen launched a violent attack on Mbasombo, a community in Gwer East Local Government Area leaving at least 15 farmers dead and scores displaced.

The Mbasombo community is just a seven minutes drive from Makurdi, the state capital. The attack, which reportedly began late into the night, left several others missing.

Witnesses and survivors described a horrifying scene as heavily armed assailants stormed the village under the cover of darkness, opening fire indiscriminately and setting houses on fire.

The attack sent fear down the spines of inhabitants, with many residents fleeing into surrounding bushes and nearby settlements.

A resident farmer who recounted the incident to New Telegraph on condition of anonymity said, “we were already asleep when we heard gunshots coming from the direction of the farmlands.”

“At first, we thought it might be thieves, but then the shooting became intense. We ran with our children, some without shoes, into the night. I have not seen my younger brother since then,” he said.

Fifteen corpses have been recovered by local farmers who said the casualty figure could be higher, as many villagers remain missing and others said to be severely injured.

“This is a massacre, not just an attack,” said one Igbo trader who simply identified himself as Michael. “This is not some remote village hidden in the hinterlands.

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This happened right at the doorstep of the state capital. If this can happen here, then it means nowhere is safe in Benue anymore.”

Residents of the town criticised the lack of immediate response from security agencies, despite the proximity to major military and police formations in Makurdi town.

Others expressed anger that such a deadly attack could go unchecked for hours. It was gathered that local vigilante groups attempted to repel the attackers, but were overwhelmed by the superior firepower and number of the assailants, who reportedly retreated before dawn, leaving behind a trail of destruction.