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# Nigeria: Nasarawa - Villagers Flee As Clash Claims 40

George Okoh

Nasarawa — As the clash between Fulani herdsmen and peasant farmers at Ubeni Gida village in Nasarawa Local Government area of Nasarawa State claimed about 40 lives weekend, the villagers are now fleeing the area for neighbouring states.



22 December 2009

THISDAY investigation revealed yesterday that an uneasy calm pervades the village as more residents are making their way out for fear of more attack from the herdsmen.

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Stress Management Ball Manage Stress Anxiety Therapy Treating Anxiety The clash occurred when a farmer in Ubeni Gida was killed by a Fulani herdsman following an argument that ensued between the two regarding an allegation that the herdsmen destroyed the farmer's crops.

The relatives of the late farmer, whose identity was withheld by the police, reacted by attacking the Fulani herdsman and killed him, which led to a full blown crisis between the Fulani communities and the Ubeni Gida village. It was alleged that the Fulani settlement around the village regrouped and attacked the unsuspecting community killing scores of people.

As at yesterday, over 40 communities had been sacked and the residents are now seeking refuge in neighbouring towns of Keffi, Akwanga and Nasarawa Eggon. The state Police Commissioner Shehu Babalola, had weekend said the clash had been a "perennial problem" in the area.

According to him, a fight broke out between the herdsmen and the farmers in the same community on December 6, but the police were able to restore normalcy to the area. The commissioner said two units of riot policemen from MOPOL 38 in Akwanga and some army personnel were brought in to quell the crisis, adding that the situation had been brought under control and police had made several arrests.

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He also said one Musa Agi, a policeman guiding the Chief of Ubeni Gida, was killed by the Fulani invaders when he tried to protect the chief who escaped to an unknown destination. The chairman of the council declined comments when approached by THISDAY but was said to be unaware of the situation when it broke out. Meanwhile, Governor Aliyu Akwe Doma in an emergency meeting with heads of security agencies in the state has directed that tighter security be beefed up in the area. He assured residents of the area that the situation would be brought under control while directing a deployment of the army in the area.

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The lawmaker representing Udege/Loko in the state House of Assembly (which includes Udeni-Gida), Mohammed Baba Ibaku, said more than 30 persons died in weekend's flare up. Ibaku said dozens of houses and other properties including crops were

razed in the melee.

He said two weeks ago, a group of herdsmen drove their cattle into a rice farm, following which a farmer protested. According to him, the herdsmen's action led to a clash in which the farmer lost his life, adding that "but we held back our people and pleaded for calm, only for them to be woken up at about 6am of Friday by gunshots from some herdsmen who laid ambush around the village." "They opened fire and killed the people", he added. The lawmaker commended the prompt response from both the police and Army, saying "we need more security personnel in the area because we hear the people are still hiding in the bush and can attack again".



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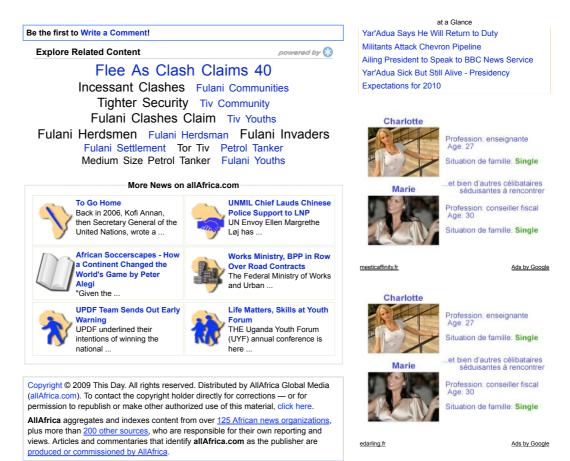
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