

**BY PETER DURU &
JOHN BULUS**

NO fewer than 68 persons were reported-ly killed while property worth millions of Naira were destroyed yesterday in Benue Gombe and Kogi states.

In Benue State, 50 lives

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68 killed in attack, road accidents

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were lost in a renewed attack on Tiv community in Guma Local Government of the state by suspected Fulani herdsmen. The Fulani/Tiv crisis was reportedly spreading towards Makurdi, Benue State capital yesterday, with refugees fleeing the war zone and streaming into the metropolis.

This came as eight persons died on the Lokoja-Abuja road yesterday.

Vanguard gathered the areas hardest hit by the renewed attack in Benue State include Tiv settlements at Dooga, Kpata, Lokobi Ajimaka, Ekeae, Giza, Yogbo and Mbagwem communities.

Those fleeing from the area with their wives and children from Kpata village, said the number of the dead could exceed 50 stressing that as many as 350 persons were yet to be accounted for.

Mr. Tyopine Agar who fled from one of the communities told *Vanguard*: "Many of our people were in the farms when the crisis erupted and till now no one knows their whereabouts."

Agar said the Fulani herdsmen who were assisted by the people residing on the border of Benue and Nasarawa states in Doma town laid siege on their villages, shooting and burning both their houses and property.

Moved by the level of devastation in the communities, the Speaker of the Benue House of Assembly, Mr. Dave Iyorchemba, who paid an unscheduled visit to some of the refugees now camped at the Local Government Education Authority, LGEA, Primary School, Kadroko, lamented the recurrent attack on the Tiv communities by herdsmen.

Iyorchemba who asked the people to remain calm, regretted the insensitivity of the Nasarawa State Government to the plight of the victims and urged both the Benue and Nasarawa governments to take decisive steps to check the further carnage in the affected communities.

He also implored the two states to implement recommendations of the peace

committee they had earlier set up by releasing a white paper on findings of the panel set up in June to investigate the immediate and remote causes of the recurrent crisis.

He said: "Aside being the Speaker of the Benue State House of Assembly, the people affected in these skirmishes are my constituents and Tiv communities affected in Nasarawa State have contributed in no small measure to the socioeconomic development of the state and therefore deserve the protection of that state government. What is happening is rather unfortunate and heart rendering. On the part of the Benue State government we have already started releasing relief materials to the displaced people but unfortunately no such as-

sistance is coming from the Nasarawa State government."

He called on the National Emergency Management Agency to move in with relief materials to thousands of displaced persons.

The Village Head of Dooga, one of the ravaged villages, Zaki Tsashaku, lamented the level of devastation in the community just as he urged the Benue and Nasarawa state governments to jointly deploy security personnel to the affected communities before the crises would spread to major towns in both states.

Meanwhile, no fewer than 10 persons lost their lives while several others sustained serious injuries in an auto crash at Bagali village, along Bauchi - Gombe road.

How govt lost N355bn from privatised firms

By HENRY UMORU & INALEGWU SHAIBU

ABUJA—THE Senate, yesterday, commenced debate on the report of its ad-hoc committee on the privatization processes of the Federal Government as it emerged that only N146 billion of the N501 billion realized from the sales was paid into government

treasury.

While majority of the senators contributing to the debate on activities of the Bureau of Public Enterprises, BPE, expressed concern on the non-implementation of past reports of the Senate, a couple on the minority benches demanded the indictment of former President Olusegun Obasanjo over the botched sales.

ings by the Committee.

He said: "The DGs all of them, without exception had faults in running several accounts instead of one as specified in the Public Enterprise Act of 1999. About eight of them starting with Mallam Nasiru El-Rufai because he was the first. They were not supposed to do that. N501 billion was realized from the sale.