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When messengers of death came calling: Bloodbath in Benue community

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The hinterlands in Benue State have gradually become theatres of war where the rules of engagement and sanctity of human life are brazenly disregarded. From Gwer West to Guma and from Gwer to Oturkpo and Makurdi, it is the same sad story of killings and bloodbath occasioned by conflicts between the natives of these communities and invading Fulani herdsmen.

BY PETER DURU, Makurdi

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A few days ago, two persons were slaughtered by herdsmen at Uvir community during a fishing festival at Ake Lake in Guma Local Government Area. The outcry that trailed that killing had hardly died down when another five persons were slaughtered in Gwer West Local Government Area.



(<http://www.vanguardngr.com/2013/04/when-messengers-of-death-came-calling-bloodbath-in-benue-community/benue-boils-2/>)

People fleeing their ancestral homes

Specifically, three police officers and two others were among those who were reportedly killed in the fresh conflict between Fulani herdsmen and native Tiv farmers at Anguwah village of Gwer West Local Government Area.

Vanguard Metro gathered from sources that the crisis erupted in the community on a Friday afternoon after a Fulani herdsman allegedly stole the honey of a bee farmer in the village.

“Unknown to the herdsman, one of the children of the bee farmer was watching him as he stole the honey from the pot and he alerted his father who confronted the Fulani man. Because of the prolonged bottled animosity between Tiv farmers and the herdsmen, the situation escalated leading to killings and destruction of property and farmland,” the source said.

Contacted on telephone, the Gwer West Local Government Council Chairman, Mrs. Eunice Mbajwa, confirmed that the issue was initially resolved amicably but noted that the Fulani herdsman later mobilized his kinsmen who attacked the village around 6pm same Friday.

Mrs Mbajwa who said she informed the Benue State Police Command about the incident, however regretted that while the mobile policemen were on their way to the village in an Hillux vehicle in company of the security officer attached to the council, they were ambushed by the herdsmen who killed all the occupants of the vehicle, including the three policemen.

Continuing, the chairman said: “I was informed of the little skirmish between the Fulani man and the Tiv bee farmer, and I immediately alerted the police. But around 6pm that Friday, somebody phoned and informed me that some Fulani men had crossed the river in three boats and were armed to the teeth. When I heard this, I immediately called the police and they swiftly swung into action. I later gathered that one of the security officers in my council and three mobile policemen who were on their way in an Hillux vehicle to keep surveillance in the area were ambushed and killed.”

When contacted, the Benue State Police Public Relations Officer, PPRO, DSP Daniel Ezealo, confirmed the death of two police officers, adding that the third might have been abducted.

“I can confirm that two policemen were killed but we strongly believe that the third was abducted. We are yet to trace him or know his whereabouts but our men are still searching for him,” he said.

Vanguard Metro recalls that only recently, the paramount ruler of Nagi Kingdom of Gwer West Local Government, HRH Chief Daniel Abomste had called on the Federal Government to create grazing routes for herdsmen across the country in order to avert

skirmishes and further loss of innocent lives in many Benue communities.

Abomste had warned that the continued destruction of the farmlands of Benue farmers by the invading herdsmen and their cattle would continue to be a major reason for conflict in Benue communities.

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