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BREAKING NEWS

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## Probe chemical weapons use on Tiv villages, Benue tells int'l community

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BY PETER DURU

Benue State government is asking the international community to probe the alleged use of chemical weapons to kill over 200 persons in Tiv villages by suspected Fulani mercenaries.

This demand came as no fewer than 19 persons were yesterday reportedly killed and 17 others abducted in the villages of Agatu local government area of the state by suspected herders.

The victims of the fresh attack included women, children and the elderly who were chased out of their villages by the marauders who razed Olegaje, Ogumogbo, Ejuma and Ogbagaji, the headquarters of the local government area.

The council chairman, Mr. Stephen Dutse, said “the attackers invaded the communities simultaneously at about 10pm on Friday night when most of the villagers were fast asleep.”Dutse added: “19 persons lost their lives in the attack while 17 others were abducted by the invaders; we are yet to trace their whereabouts.”

Corroborating the statement, the member representing Agatu constituency at Benue State House of Assembly, Alhaji Audu Sule, lamented the near absence of security operatives in the affected communities at the time of the attack.

Meantime, the state government has appealed to international agencies to investigate what it described as the unconventional killing in communities invaded by the suspected mercenaries.

According to the Benue Commissioner for Information, Mr. Justin Amase, “our investigations uncovered that 200 persons were killed by the invaders and these people had no cut or bullet wounds.”

Amose stated, “We are still investigating. We urge the Federal Government, the international community to step into the matter because we suspect the use of poisonous gas on these victims by the invaders.”

Meanwhile, the state Police Public Relations Officer, PPRO, Superintendent Daniel Ezeala, said the command was yet to be briefed on the latest attacks in Agatu.