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Suspected Fulani herdsmen kill 28, injure many in Benue

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By Peter Duru

MAKURDI — At least 28 person were feared dead on Saturday evening while several others sustained injuries as suspected Fulani herdsmen attacked three villages at Mbadwem district of Guma Local Government Area, the hometown of Benue State governor-elect, Dr. Samuel Ortom.

The attackers also razed several houses and farmland in the three affected villages which include Tse Uosu, Gbudu and Branch Umenger.

Vanguard gathered from a source, who craved anonymity, that the crisis was sparked off by an alleged killing of two Fulani herdsmen by some yet-to-be identified youths in the affected area.

According to him, “two days ago, two Fulanis were killed in that area for no justifiable reasons. So, what happened is a reprisal which may have claimed no fewer than 28 lives.”

Vanguard further learned that the crisis has led to mass movement of the inhabitants to neighbouring villages for fear of being caught in the bloody conflict, while Fulanis were also reported to be leaving Guma in droves to parts of Makurdi, the Benue State capital, and Nasarawa State.

The Parish Priest in charge of St. Francis Catholic Church, Daudu, where some of the displaced persons are taking refuge, Rev. Fr. Solomon Mffa, lamented the outbreak of fresh crisis in the area.

He urged the incoming administration of Gen. Muhammadu Buhari to take decisive steps to bring the crisis to an end in the interest of all the parties concerned.

Contacted, the state Police Public Relations Officer, PPRO, Assistant Superintendent, ASP, Austin Ezeani who confirmed the crisis said: “It was as a result of the supposed killing of two Fulani herdsmen in that area, two days ago.

“The gang, after robbing them and dispossessing them of their personal belongings, killed them and abandoned their corpses. So, the Fulani probably informed their brothers in Nasarawa and they came and carried out a reprisal attack.”

The PPRO who urged the communities leaders to fish out the bad elements creating problems in the communities for prosecution, regretted that “these boys resort to all kinds of criminalities and after all that, run away and leave the innocent ones to suffer,” Ezeani lamented.

This attack is one out of the many which have claimed hundreds of lives in clashes between herdsmen and the farming communities across the state despite the constitution of various peace committees involving the two parties, the fighting and killings have continued unabated.

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