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Police captures 20 cattle rustlers in Benue

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By Peter Duru, Makurdi

IT was harvest of arrests across Benue last week, after the state Police Command declared an onslaught against the masterminds of several violent crimes in parts of the state.

The operation conducted under the direct supervision of the Commissioner of Police, Mr. Bashir Makama, led to the arrest of members of a suspected syndicate who recently rustled over 200 cows in Agatu local government area. The police also arrested another gang of suspected Fulani mercenaries that allegedly masterminded the attack on some communities in the state.



Recovered Cattles

Parading the suspects at the Command headquarters in Makurdi, the Commissioner of Police explained that four suspects alleged to be behind last month's killing of a herdsman at Asa 11 Village, Oturkpo Local Government Area, were nabbed after the suspects were trailed by the police.

Makama said, "among those arrested in the operation were three suspects who allegedly killed several cattle belonging to one Alhaji Adamu Suleiman, early in February at Ugblagidi-Ugboju in Oturkpo Local Government Area.

Harvest of arrests

"Just yesterday, our patrol team at Adoka intercepted and arrested one Michael Itodo who claimed to be a member of the Civilian Joint Task Force, CJTF, and five others at about 3.00am, with 17 rustled cattle in two J5 Vehicles with number plates LG 89 DKP Benue and LG 345 LAM Kogi. Also arrested in the course of the operation early this month was one Linus Yachinga and four others with six live cows while Pius Iwar and two others were arrested separately with two dead cows at Adaji Village in Kwande LGA."

Makama said the rustling of the cows in the community led to a reprisal attack on the area by aggrieved herdsmen which led to the death of some persons. He said,

“among those we nabbed were two suspects who allegedly caused the disappearance of one Hussein Idris, at Ichama District of Okpokwu LGA. We are still investigating the matter to ascertain the culpability of those fingered in the case.

“Also in our net is one Terfa Awua, who was arrested at Hugh Village in Vandeikya late last month with 11 rustled cattle in his residence. The suspect confessed to the crime and would soon be charged to court on completion of our investigation. One Ijirgba Joseph was also apprehended. He was alleged to have jointly with others now at large, killed a cow at Siidi village along Gboko road, Makurdi. He was arrested in the process of conveying the remaining butchered meat. The matter is still under investigation.



Nigerian Police

“On the list are three persons, strongly suspected to be the brains behind the death of a herdsman whose corpse was found in a bush at Mbahimin Village, Gwer East LGA, within the same period.”

Alleged masterminds

According to Makama, one John Chongon and two other suspects alleged to be behind the disappearance of a herdsman in Gboko are also in police net. He

explained that the victim was on transit but stopped to buy cigarettes at a shop when the incident occurred late last month, adding that the matter was still under investigation.

He further stated that the operation led to the arrest of some of the alleged masterminds of the mid March attack on Ubaben Mbahimin Village in Gwer East LGA where three persons were killed in bizarre circumstances. "Among those in our net is one Jubrin Bahago and three others who were alleged to have shot and matcheted their victim at Chieke Village in Tarka LGA. We are still investigating that case to unmask all those who played any role in that dastardly act," he added.

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