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Herdsman invade mosque in Niger, kill 21

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By Wole Mosadomi

Minna—THE unbelievable happened in Gbara Ward, Mokwa Local Government Area of Niger State, Saturday night, when herdsman invaded Etogi community mosque and killed 21 people.



Vanguard gathered that there had been a disagreement between some young men of Northern extraction and members of the community, during which a herdsman was killed.



The herdsman had earlier demanded for a piece of land close to the community to farm on, with an agreement that a certain percentage will be paid annually to the Village Head. The agreement eventually collapsed.

When the herdsman were asked to honour the agreement, they reportedly refused, claiming real ownership of the land, which led to a fight that resulted in the death of the herdsman.



Armed Fulani-herdsmen

It was gathered that the other herdsman mobilised and attacked the community mosque, when Muslim faithful were observing their early morning prayers.

An eyewitness, Malam Mairo Mohammed, who confirmed the incident to Vanguard on phone, said that the attackers killed the Iman of the community and all other worshippers.

Many of the women and children, who were woken up by the gunshots, hurriedly took to their heels, sustaining severe injuries in the process.

Police, DSS deployed



Contacted, the state Police Command Public Relations Officer, DSP Bala Elkana, confirmed the report, adding that 21 people have been confirmed killed during the violence.

Elkana said: "It is confirmed that the attack was a reprisal to an earlier killing of a herder by the villagers. The killing of a herder was managed, but it appears they were not satisfied and decided to retaliate.

"Twenty one people were killed, while eight people sustained various degrees of injuries during the attack."

Elkana also said mobile policemen have been deployed to the community, while the Department of State Services, DSS, and officers of the command's Criminal Investigation Department were also on ground to keep peace.

He called on members of the community to cease fire and cooperate with security agents to restore peace to the area.

