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Gunmen kill 14, injure scores in Benue

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By **Soni Daniel & Peter Duru**

Makurdi—It was a bloody weekend in Benue State, following the murder of 14 persons by unknown gunmen in two separate attacks on communities in Ukum and Okpokwu local government areas of the state.



Gunmen hit police station in South Africa, kill 5

This came as Boko Haram reportedly killed one of its prominent commanders, Ali Gaga, for planning to surrender to the military with 300 of its captives

Vanguard gathered from an eyewitness, who claimed he narrowly escaped being killed by the attackers, that the armed invaders stormed Akena market and Agbaaye, Boirkyo council ward of Ukum local government, killing eight and injuring three others.

He said: “They invaded Akena market area at about 6:30 pm on Friday on four motorbikes, which had three passengers on each. They shot sporadically at anything in sight, including traders and people who stay around the market.

“The shooting led to pandemonium as people were fleeing for their lives, especially traders, most of who took cover in their stalls but unfortunately, three persons were not too lucky as they were found dead after the attackers had zoomed off.

“The operation did not last five minutes and from Akena market, they headed straight to Agbaaye, which is an adjoining village, where they also opened fire on innocent people, shooting sporadically.

“This time, they killed five persons, including my relation who for close to 30 years suffered mental health challenge. Three other persons also sustained bullet wounds in the attack.

“I was lucky to have narrowly escaped being killed in the attack because I was approaching our compound when the attackers besieged our community, but I hid myself in the bush while the rapid gunfire continued.

...Six killed in Okpokwu LGA

Meanwhile, six persons including a police sergeant, were reportedly killed and several others injured in another sporadic shooting by unknown armed men at a drinking bar in Okpoga, Okpokwu Local Government Area of the state.

According to a source in the community, 10 gunmen invaded the area also on motorbikes, shooting sporadically at anything in sight, leading to the death of six persons and injuring several others, including an emergency ambulance service provider in the community.

Confirming incidents, Police Public Relations Officer, Deputy Superintendent, DSP, Moses Yamu, said victims of the Okpoga shooting were killed in a beer parlour.

He said: "Six persons, including a Police sergeant who was in mufti, were killed in the beer parlour before the Police arrived the scene but preliminary investigation revealed that the yet- to-be identified armed men were from Ollo community.

"Meanwhile the Commissioner of Police, Mr. Ene Okon, has ordered the Area Commander to relocate to that area, even as teams of *Operation Zenda*, Police Mobile Force and the Counter Terrorism Unit, CTU, have been drafted to the area to ensure that the culprits are identified and arrested. Investigation has also commenced to unravel the motive for the attack."

Yamu confirmed that six corpses had so far been recovered from the attacks on Agena market area and Agbaaye in Boirkyo council ward of Ukum local government area.

"From the report we have, in Agena village, one person was shot dead and five others were killed in Agbaaye village. So the total number of dead bodies recovered in both attacks so far were six and three others were injured and are currently receiving treatment.

Boko Haram kills commander over plan to surrender with 300 captives

Meanwhile, a prominent Boko Haram Commander, Ali Gaga, has been killed by other commanders of the terrorist group while planning to surrender to the military and escape with about 300 captives from their den, according to a competent source.

The sources, who spoke on grounds of anonymity, said Ali Gaga was killed by other commanders loyal to Mamman Nur's faction who got hint of his plan.

It was learned in a video exclusively obtained by *PR Nigeria* that Gaga had already perfected his plan to surrender to the military in a negotiation brokered by a prominent non-governmental organisation conversant with the issues, when his plan was leaked to other Boko Haram commanders, and this resulted in his execution.

The sources said Gaga, a Fulani man from Taraba State, was forced to join the Mamman Nur's faction of the group three years ago after his cows were seized from him by Boko Haram on the fringe of the Lake Chad.

"Gaga was trained on how to fight wars and engage in combat operations. He also possessed an extraordinary ability to know the terrain because he was a herdsman. This elevated him to a level of a commanding officer by the Mamman Nur's faction.

"Gaga was not interested in holding captives for ransom like others. What is paramount to him is getting his livestock and continue what he was doing as a herdsman and reunite with his family," sources said.

The sources also revealed that Gaga was already in touch with foreign influencers who would have rescued him and others before he was killed.

In one of the videos, Gaga spoke in Hausa language and introduced other leaders working towards rescuing and escaping with the captives to surrender to the

military authority..

He also expressed gratitude to prominent leaders of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) persuading them to surrender and assured them of adequate safety and protection once they surrendered voluntarily.

“We are tired of this senseless act of terrorism. We are ready to surrender with my people and other captive and live a normal life, away from this unfortunate terrain of needless suffering,” he said in about 3-minute video recording in a forest.

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Bloody weekend in Benue as 14 killed, scores injured in sporadic shootings

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July 15, 2018



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