

Bloody Sunday in Benue: Mother, 2 children, military officer, 20 others killed in Agatu

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By Peter Duru

Makurdi—A woman, her two children, a retired military personnel and 20 others were feared dead in an early morning attack on Okokolo community by armed youths and militia from Abugbe village all in Agatu Local Government Area of Benue State, yesterday.



herdsmen killings

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Vanguard gathered from sources in the troubled communities that the age-long crisis, centred on the ownership of ponds in the fishing communities, left many others including health personnel with bullet wounds, while several houses were also razed in Okokolo village.

According to the source, the latest attack came less than 24 hours after the signing of a peace accord by the feuding communities to put an end to the lingering feud.

The source said: “Just when we thought that peace was returning to these communities that have been engaged in bloody conflicts, early this morning(yesterday), when majority of the people of Okokolo had gone to church,

armed youths from Abugbe supported by a gang of militia stormed Okokolo, shooting sporadically and killing any person in sight.

“The people ran for their lives, but the invaders chased them and killed anyone they caught up with. They did not stop there, but set houses and other property ablaze, after which they retreated.

“As we speak, some of the houses and huts are still on fire while the entire village has been deserted. So far we have been able to recover 12 corpses including a mother and her two children and a retired WO II (names withheld). But we are yet to locate about 11 persons and we fear that they must have been killed. But the search is ongoing.

“Our worry is that this crisis is being propelled by prominent people, who are not willing and ready to bring it to an end despite all the peace efforts.

“Several of the wounded have also been rushed to public and private hospitals in Agatu and Apa Local Government areas.”

Contacted, the Caretaker Chairman Agatu council, Mr. Usman Alilu, said he had directed soldiers to the area to deal decisively with the situation and arrest the masterminds.

“We are on top of the situation,” he said.

On his part, state Chairman of Peoples Democratic Party, PDP, Sir John Ngbede, who is a native of Agatu, expressed regrets at the turn of events in the area, assuring that the Caretaker Chairman was in touch with security personnel, who would ensure that all the masterminds were arrested.

The command’s Public Relations Officer, Deputy Superintendent Catherine Anene, confirmed 10 deaths in the Agatu crisis.

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