

Gunmen on rampage, kill hotel manager, abduct 8 in Delta; kill 2 in Zamfara

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- Bandits raid Kujemu village in Zamfara, kill 2
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- CSOs express worry over renewed herdsmen attack on Benue communities

By Festus Ahon, Peter Duru, Akpokona Omafuiere & Perez Brisibe

Gunmen are currently on the prowl in different parts of the country, as no fewer than three persons were killed in communities in Delta and Zamfara states in the last twenty-four hours, while eight others were also abducted.

The killings came as apex cultural body of the Urhobo nation, Urhobo Progress Union, UPU, yesterday tasked President Muhammad Buhari to muster the moral, practical and constitutional will to stop the criminal activities of armed herdsmen in Urhobo land, following the killing of eight persons at Uhweru kingdom a few weeks ago

This is even as a coalition of Civil Society Organizations, CSOs, in Benue State expressed worry over the renewed armed attacks by marauding herdsmen on Benue communities that claimed lives. They also called for the strengthening of the military spike operation, code-named Operation Whirl Stroke, OPWS, to stem the tide.

In the Delta State incident, the gunmen on Wednesday night besieged Issele-Azagba community in Aniocha North Local Government Area of Delta State, killing the manager of a brothel (names withheld) in the community and kidnapping eight persons.

Vanguard gathered that the incident, which reportedly occurred at about 8 pm, is coming on the heels of the release of Mrs Helen Benwari, who was abducted about two weeks ago after her husband, Daniel Benwari, was killed in the same community, while her daughter was injured in the attack. The Manager of the brothel who was simply identified as Emeka, according to sources, was reportedly shot dead by the gunmen who saw him as a threat.

A youth leader in the community, Comrade Edozie Ogoegbu, who spoke with newsmen, decried the incessant attack of the community by suspected herdsmen, lamenting that they recently protested the frequency with which their community was being invaded by armed herdsmen.

Ogoegbu said: "Our main demand to the state Commissioner of Police, Hafiz Inuwa, is the establishment of a police station in the community.

"We also want the state government to stand up to its responsibilities of protecting the lives and property of the people. Our fear and dissatisfaction over the repeated attack by the killer herdsmen remain a major source of concern.

"For a while now, we have been facing serious security challenges in the community. Our people are being killed, raped, while farm produce are destroyed

daily, yet nothing is being done to stop the mayhem.

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“As it stands, nobody is safe anymore in this community. Hunger and starvation stare at people in the face as farmers no longer go to a farm for fear of being killed or raped. That was why we went on a peaceful protest to register our grievance over the rate of attacks.

“Our vigilante group has been overpowered by the sophisticated weapons the herdsmen are using. So, we are begging the Nigeria Police as a matter of urgency, to establish Divisional Police Station in the community to help in reducing the incessant attacks.

“With the police station, our people will be rest assured that they can count on the police for the safety of their lives and property. The woman, who was abducted for four days, after her husband was shot, was rushed to the Federal Medical Center, FMC in Asaba, for treatment.

“She was held hostage for four days in the bush and beaten to stupor before her family members and the church could pay her ransom to secure her release”.

At press time last night, an effort was made to reach the police authority to speak on the incident, to no avail.

On the Zamfara attack, the village head of Kujemi village in Dansadau Emirate of Maru Local Government Area and one other person were killed when bandits invaded the community.

Confirming the incident, Zamfara State Police Public Relations Officer, SP Muhammad Shehu, said in Gusau that some suspected armed bandits in large number invaded the village and killed one Malam Gambo of Karauchi Village and Mustapha Halilu of Dansadau district.

“On receipt of the information, a combined team of policemen attached to Operation Puff Adder, in conjunction with the military have been dispatched to the area to forestall a further attack on the neighbouring villages, as well as, arrest the perpetrators of the dastardly act”.

The command appealed for the continued support and cooperation of the public through giving useful information on the activities of criminal elements, with a view to taking proactive measures.

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