

Again, suspected armed herdsmen kill seven mourners in Benue communities

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...scores injured, communities sacked, royal father cries for help



Peter Duru, Makurdi

No fewer than seven mourners were feared dead and scores injured in a fresh attack by suspected armed herdsmen on Chongu, Tse Ayev and Tyohembe communities of Guma Local Government Area of Benue state.

Vanguard gathered that the herdsmen invaded Chongu community in Mbawa council ward, where mourners had gathered for a wake-keep at about 11pm Friday, killing four of the victims and injuring several others.

According to him, “we suspect that it was the same gang that moved into neighbouring Tse Ayev and Tyohembe in Mbanyiar kindred where they also attacked another group of mourners, shooting sporadically, killing three and injuring several of the mourners.”

Confirming the development, the paramount ruler of Mbagwa in Mbawa Council, Zaki Emmanuel Usuah, said that the herdsmen invaded the communities at about 11pm on Friday, shot sporadically till in the early hours of Saturday.

According to the royal father “we were at a wake keep of one of our late elders who was to be buried today(Saturday) at Chongu then we suddenly started hearing gunshots.

“At the Tyohembe they killed Chikwa and Taza Abuur and went to Tse Ayev and killed another person called Tarnum Yanum, while the bodies of four others were shattered beyond recognition.

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“While doing this they molested any woman they saw, collected their handsets and money. As I speak with you, the entire communities have been deserted and so many people have fled their homes to Daudu.

“We urge the government to send in security personnel to our communities before the situation gets out of hand,” Zaki Usuah appealed.

When contacted, the Police Public Relations Officer, Deputy Superintendent, DSP, Catherine Anene who confirmed the attack said: “yes its true but we have record of two deaths while some others are still in the hospital.”

Meanwhile, the Benue state government has accused one Mr. Garus Gololo who claimed to be the spokesman of herders, of allegedly inciting attacks on Benue communities by armed herdsmen.

The Chief Press Secretary to Governor Samuel Ortom, Mr. Terver Akase, in a response to a statement issued by Mr. Gololo few hours before the attack, said “each time herdsmen attack a Benue community, Gololo would raise a false alarm that Fulani cows were rustled before the attack occurred.

“His recent claim is that more than 2,000 cows belonging to herders were impounded by Livestock Guards and that many of the cows are secretly being killed in the quarantine unit just to divert attention from the heinous crime committed by the herdsmen militia.

“He has also claimed that the Governor is chasing Fulanis out of Benue for whatever reason only he Garus can explain.

“People such as Garus hate to see peace. Now that Governor Ortom’s efforts are yielding results and the Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law is being obeyed by majority of people, he and those in his league are restless and have resorted to sponsoring attacks in some communities.”

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