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Nursing mother, nine others killed in Benue clashes

ON APRIL 9, 2020 6:17 PM / IN [METRO](#) /**Kindly Share This Story:****....two police officers missing – PPRO**

By Peter Duru – Makurdi

No fewer than 10 persons including a nursing mother were feared dead while two police officers were also declared missing in three separate clashes in parts of Benue state.

In one of the incidents, suspected armed Jukum militia gang from neighbouring Taraba state allegedly invaded Jootar a border community in Ukum Local Government Area, LGA, killing three persons after which they set over 200 houses, yam barns and huts on fire.

A source in the area, who gave his name as Jonathan, disclosed that the armed militia gang who were dressed in military camouflage stormed the border community from Wukari at about 4:00 am and started shooting sporadically.

He said “they came in their numbers shooting and burning down houses, yam barns and farmland when people were still at sleep at about 4:am.

“The gunshot woke the people from their sleep. As they fled from their homes many of them sustained bullet wounds while three of those that were caught up with, were killed in cold blood.

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“Jootar is a war zone at the moment, houses and barns are on fire and the community has been deserted, though security personnel have moved into the community and patrolling the area tension is high,” he added.

Also yesterday, six persons, including a nursing mother, were reportedly killed at Mbamena council ward of Ukum LGA when armed militia gang from neighbouring Tongov community in Katsina/Ala LGA stormed the community shooting sporadically, killing and burning down houses and farmland.

It was gathered that the Mbamena attack was a reprisal after a gang known as Ujondo militia had a few days ago allegedly attacked Tongov killing a middle-aged man and looted property from the community.

According to a source, “the invasion of Mbamena was sparked by last week’s killing in Tongov in Katsina/Ala LGA reportedly masterminded by the Ujundu militia gang that have been tormenting communities in that axis.

“But this time, the people decided to take up arms to avenge the killing of their brother and destruction of their property by staging a reprisal on Mbamena where they killed six persons including a nursing mother, who was killed in the presence of her baby. They also razed several houses, huts and farmland.

Also, the body of a middle-aged man was yesterday morning recovered by the Police at Tyo Mu community in the outskirts of Makurdi town following a renewed clash between the Iyarev and Kparev communities in the area.

The protracted crisis in Tyo Mu was reignited Tuesday night after two months of respite. The crisis which dates years back started when the traditional ruler of the community was alleged to have set up a committee which imposed levies on brick moulders in the community who were referred to as Kparev or settlers in Mu.

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According to a source, “the Kparev youths, who own the brick moulding business in the community, have continued to resist the plan of the Iyarev leaders who own the community and had every right to impose levies.

“They started destroying food barns belonging to Kparev people but some of them are already fleeing their homes for fear of being killed.”

Reacting on the Tiv/Jukun crisis and the attack on Mbamena, the Ukum Local Government Caretaker Chairman, Mr Tortyokaa Ibellogo, condemned the attacks wondering why Jukun militia would cross into Benue to attack innocent farmers.

“The Divisional Police Officer, DPO, in Ukum informed me that five corpses have been recovered from Mbamena while three were retrieved from Jootar. I want to call on the Inspector-General of Police, IGP, and the Chief of Army Staff to as a matter of urgency intervene in this crisis. Already we are trying to battle the COVID-19 pandemic and we are faced with this challenge it is sad.” Ibellogo said.

Also reacting, the Chief Press Secretary, CPS, to Benue State Governor, Terver Akase said the government had put measures in place to arrest the development.

“Governor Ortom has expressed sadness over these unfortunate issues and he has already taken steps to end it. He has urged the people to observe restraint in the interest of all.

“Already the Governor and his Taraba State counterpart have scheduled a meeting to further discuss some of these issues to have them resolved amicably,” Akase said.

When contacted, the Police Public Relations Officer, PPRO, Deputy Superintendent, DSP, Catherine Anene, confirmed that three burnt corpses had been recovered from the incident at Jootar while another was recovered from Tyo Mu.

“As we speak, I have not received details of the issue in Mbamena from the Divisional Police Officer, DPO, in Ukum LGA. I will give you the details when it is ready,” she added.

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