

Ortom urges Benue youths to defend themselves, communities

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Samuel Ortom

By Peter Duru— Makurdi

Governor Samuel Ortom of Benue State has called on youths in the state to stand up and defend themselves and their communities against armed bandits attacking parts of the state.

Governor Ortom's call came after armed bandits reportedly invaded Agboughul village in the outskirts of Makurdi town at about 11 p.m., killing one lawyer, Mr. Moses Udam, who is also a pastor of Gospel Faith Mission; his wife Nkechi and an 88-year-old blind Mazugu Nyikor.

The murdered couple

They also inflicted bullets wound on the two teenage sons of blind Nyikor and the deceased pastor's sister after which they besieged the home of one Amaa Ate, where they made away with N200,000.

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Vanguard gathered that the invaders, who the residents claimed were herders reportedly butchered the lawyer and shot his wife after which they proceeded to the home of the blind octogenarian who they killed and also shot his two sons but one of them escaped and raised the alarm. Personnel of Operation Whirl Stroke (OPWS), the police, the Agro Rangers of the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) and members of the Benue Livestock Guards were said to have trailed the assailants tuesday night, as well as provided security for the people.

Visibly angry Governor Samuel Ortom who was among the first callers to the community addressed the people saying, "this attack is coming four days after Tse Angbande attack. It is coming from the same people who have chosen to cause pains, hardship and make peace impossible for our people.

"It is unfortunate, this is not the Nigeria or Benue of our dream. Some of us when we ventured into politics we thought we were coming to add value to development not to witness rounds of killings of our people.

"This is unfortunate. The security personnel are doing very well but it is impossible to put security men in every community or village in the state so we have continue to witness this after we sort a legitimate way of trying to stop the killings that befell us from 2009 to 2016.

"When we came in, we decided we must put an end to this if it is about cattle rearing we must find the global best practice. Why is it that countries that have more cattle have no record of conflict between herdsman and farmers. In countries that have large herds of cattle have all embraced ranching

"That is the only way to peace because cattle feed on greens and whatever they see and as the food basket of the nation there is no way you can compromise having open grazing in Benue state and at the same time feed the state and the nation.

"That is why these bandits, herdsman and terrorists most of who are not from Nigeria but have found themselves in the country and infiltrated almost every part of Nigeria and have continued to kill our people, it will not be allowed.

"Under my watch we will continue to work with the security agencies to ensure that we stop this. The security personnel are doing very well which is responsible for the relative peace we are enjoying to today.

"The security people are doing third best but these people have continued to put pains in our minds and our eyes have continued to shed tears, it is unfortunate but we will not be intimidated.

"We are not going to be provoked or say anything but to the young men listening to me, it is high time to stop this impunity. And those people laughing at us, I want to tell them that it is not just going to end as long as they continue to keep quiet in this country.

"Then the young men listening to me it is high time you arose and protect your land. The security agencies cannot do it alone without the cooperation of the community.

"Arising from what has happened this morning I have told my Security Adviser to ensure that more Livestock Guards and Vigilante members should be recruited.

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"The young men listening to me here must brace up and be ready to embrace this directive to support the security agencies on behalf of your children and the community," he said.

When contacted, OPWS Commander, Major General Yekini only said his troops were in the area but declined further comments.

"We have stabilized the area and everywhere is now calm. However you can get further details from the Defence Headquarters Media Operations on the incident," General Yekini stated.

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