



# Ebonyi massacre: Fulani herdsmen attacked 7 Igbo villages, 3000 persons displaced

•Operation Whirlstroke Military Outfit forced assailants to withdraw —Oche •Attack is barbaric —Ebonyi Commissioner

By Peter Okutu

**ABAKALIKI**—THE attack carried out by suspected herdsmen in the boundary area of Ebonyi/Benue last Sunday affected seven vilages of Ndigwe, Ataloga, Odokem, Ekile, Nduobasi, Ekpufu and Obakota, Vanguard can authoritatively report.

The attack led to the death of over 30 indigenes of Ebonyi while some survivors are still receiving treatment at the Alex-Ekweme Federal University Teaching Hospital, Abakaliki.

In a statement, the Executive Chairman of Ado Local Government Area of Benue State, Chief James Oche said "Operation Whirlstroke Military Outfit after we reached out to them, helped salvage the ensuing massacre by repelling the attacks and forcing the assailants to withdraw."

According to the Statement: "In the early hours of Sunday, May 30, 2021, herdsmen in their numbers concomitantly attacked several Igbo speaking communities of Ado Local Government Area of Benue State. They unleashed an unprecedented degree of terror, killing no fewer than 30 persons as at the time of this release.

"The communities worst hit by the attack are; Ndigwe village, Ataloga village, Odokem, Ekile village, Nduobasi village, Ekpufu and Obakota villages. The residents of these villages have been completely displaced. While others have lost their lives, many are yet to be found and have remained missing.

"It was the response of the Operation Whirlstroke Military Outfit after we reached out to them that helped salvage the ensuing massacre by repelling the attacks and forcing the assailants to

withdraw.

"We condemn in strong terms this attack and wish to say that it is one too many an onslaught on our people and the devastation suffered is better imagined. We have a fresh situation of about 3000 internally displaced persons caused by this attack in addition to the 2000 we had from previous attacks.

"While there are insinuations from unsubstantiated sources that the attack was a reprisal for IPOB's alleged murder of a herdsman, we categorically state with emphasis that, Benue State is not and can never be party to IPOB agitation and attacking our people on IPOB related issues is a thing we will not accept.

"In view of the ensuing murder of our people by these herdsmen, we urge our people to rise up and take all steps as may be necessary to give self defence to themselves, as it would be cowardly to remain arms-folded and be murdered right in our homes.

"We further appreciate and pledge our loyalty to the government of Benue State. The Anti-Open Grazing and Ranches Establishment Law of our state stands and we are committed to its enforcement no matter what. We call on the federal government to live up to its responsibility of protecting the lives and property of Nigerians, as the growing insecurity is fast turning the country into the Hobbean state of nature.

"We urge our people not to be discouraged, but to rise up to the task in defence of our fatherland, as we will continue to support in the best way, time and resources would afford us."

Carrying out an on the spot assessment of the attack on Izzi Community in Benue State, Chief

Onyekachi Nwebonyi, Commissioner for Capital City Development, Ebonyi State, described the attack as barbaric and savage and enjoined the people to remain calm but vigilant.

He described as worrisome, the incessant attacks on unarmed and defenceless citizens by marauding herdsmen while the federal government keeps aloof. He stated that Ebonyi State government under Governor David Umahi is leaving no stone unturned in making sure that the lives and property of residents of the state are protected.

He further decried the lackadaisical attitude of the Benue State government and wondered why the Benue State government could not show any concern or action when the people they claim are their own are being massacred and their property destroyed wantonly, even after the carnage.

He stated that the incident has clearly shown that Benue State does not accept the people of the area either ethnically or geographically. He said there is a question to answer on why the people of Ado and Oju LGAs of Benue State could allow the attackers free access to attack Izzi people and leave after the incident without any hindrance. The whole thing, he said, smacks of something fishy.

He however commended the Ebonyi State governor for his quick response and immediate dispatch of relief materials to the affected community.

He said the fact that the Governor of Ebonyi State took prompt response and responsibility of the medical treatment of those injured in the attack showed that he recognizes the people as Ebonyians, which they truly are.