

Monarch, 24 others killed as armed herders invade 3 Benue LGAs

By Peter Duru

MAKURDI—A traditional ruler, Zaki Unongo Shaayange and 24 others were Monday night reportedly killed in three separate attacks on communities in Logo, Tarka and Guma Local Government Areas of Benue State by suspected herdsmen.

The attack also left many hospitalised with severe machete and gunshot injuries.

It was gathered from a community leader, Chief Joseph Anawa, that the armed herdsmen numbering about six blocked and took over the Anyiin-Tse Kile road in Ukemberagya Ward of Gaambetiev Logo LGA on Monday at about 7:15 pm.

He said: "They shot and killed the traditional ruler, Zaki Unongo Shaayange, at Ikyaan village, matcheted many who are now in critical condition at the NKST Hospital, Anyiin.

"One of the victims of the attack, Mr Aondoakura Kile, also said the bandits made away with some Baja motorcycles of their victims."

It was also gathered from a local source that no fewer than nine persons were gunned down the same Monday at about 8 pm by armed herdsmen who invaded Tse-Sumaka village near Umenge, Mbadwem Council Ward in Guma LGA.

The marauders were reported to have invaded the community from neighbouring Nasarawa State, shooting sporadically and chasing their victims out of their homes.

"They shot at the people as they fled and anyone they caught up with was not spared. Nine persons were killed and many others sustained injuries. As we speak, women and children are fleeing their homes in their numbers in search of safe areas in neighbouring communities to hide themselves," he said.

Confirming the attack, Guma council chairman, Mr Caleb Aba, told newsmen on the phone that the attack was unprovoked, adding: "These days, these herdsmen don't have to be provoked before they attack and kill because the agenda is to chase us away from our ancestral homes and occupy our land."

●Benue people now endangered specie —Ortom ●Says 'we've only one option: to defend ourselves or get extinct'

It was also gathered that the armed herdsmen at about the same time invaded Tiortyu community, which is less than 18 kilometres from Makurdi town, on Makurdi-Gboko road in Tarka LGA, where 15 persons, including women, were either hacked or shot dead.

That attack triggered an angry protest by the youths of the area, who took over the busy Makurdi-Gboko road where they laid the corpses of the victims for hours, stopping all vehicular movements on that axis of the state.

Benue people now endangered specie—Ortom

Meanwhile, Governor Samuel Ortom has restated his call on the people to rise and defend themselves and save their families from the mindless killings being perpetrated in the state by the marauders.

The governor, who was reacting to the simultaneous attacks on the three LGAs, in a statement, yesterday, in

Makurdi by his Chief Press Secretary, Nathaniel Ikyur, reassured that his government would not shy away from its commitment to provide welfare and security for the people.

He lamented that "it is becoming increasingly glaring everyday that my people are now endangered specie and so we can no longer wait for help from anywhere. My people will have to rise to the occasion to defend themselves and their heritage against the army of occupation.

"We are law-abiding citizens. We have cried for help against these invaders but nothing is forthcoming. We are left alone and it looks like it is a deliberate strategy. Now we have only one option; to defend ourselves or get extinct. This is a case for our survival.

Contacted, the Police Public Relations Officer, Catherine Anene, said she was at the scene of one of the attacks with the state Police Commissioner and could not talk, but promised to get back.

Lagos NSCDC impounds 7,600 litres of petrol in Badagry

By Bose Adelaja

SIXTY-FOUR sacks containing 7,600 litres of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS), were impounded by operatives of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, NSCDC, Lagos State Command during an operation at Isalu creeks, Badagry area of the state.

The operation, yesterday, was carried out by the Marine and Anti-vandal Team of the Badagry Division, of the Command led by Chief Superintendent of Corps, Akinyemi Ayodeji, after a tip-off.

Disclosing this in a statement, NSCDC Lagos State Commandant, Eweka Okoro, described the operation as proof of his commitment to eradicating oil pipeline vandalism amidst the

forthcoming Easter celebration in the state.

While the preliminary investigation has commenced into the matter, the commandant also directed the anti-vandal unit of the command to evacuate the suspected products back to the Lagos State Command.

According to him, the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) in the state will also be contacted for proper evacuation of the products because it is highly inflammable.

"The suspected products were estimated at 7,600 litres of PMS. What is more important here is the act of sabotage, which will never be allowed to thrive in the state in line with our mandate, no matter the number of products attempted to be vandalised by the untoward saboteurs."