

18, including children killed as armed herders attack Benue market, communities

By Peter Duru,
Makurdi

Eighteen persons including children were feared dead in a fresh armed herdsman attack on Ukoloh and three other neighbouring villages in Guma Local Government Area, LGA, of Benue state. The marauders who were said to have invaded the communities from neighbouring Nasarawa state at about 4pm on Thursday, killed several of the victims who were trading at the village market at the time of the attack.

According to a source who spoke on condition of anonymity, the armed herders who had in the last two months staged repeated attacks on parts of Guma also attacked commuters on Makurdi-Lafia road close to the Ortese Internally Displaced Persons, IDPs camp where one person was killed and several others sustained injuries.

He said "the attacks started around 4pm, they invaded the communities from neighbouring Nasarawa state and started shooting sporadically, killing anyone they came across. Several people were killed at the Ukoloh market and other surrounding villages including children; while many others sustained injuries.

"As we speak the entire place is like a war zone, people are fleeing their homes and running to anywhere they can find safety since no one knows where they would attack next because the attack was unprovoked."

Confirming the attack, the Chairman of the LGA, Dr. Michael Uba disclosed that 10 persons were killed in the market while eight others were killed in three neighbouring villages.

He stated that the herders who appeared in black attire stormed the market in a commando style and started shooting the unsus-

pecting traders and their customers.

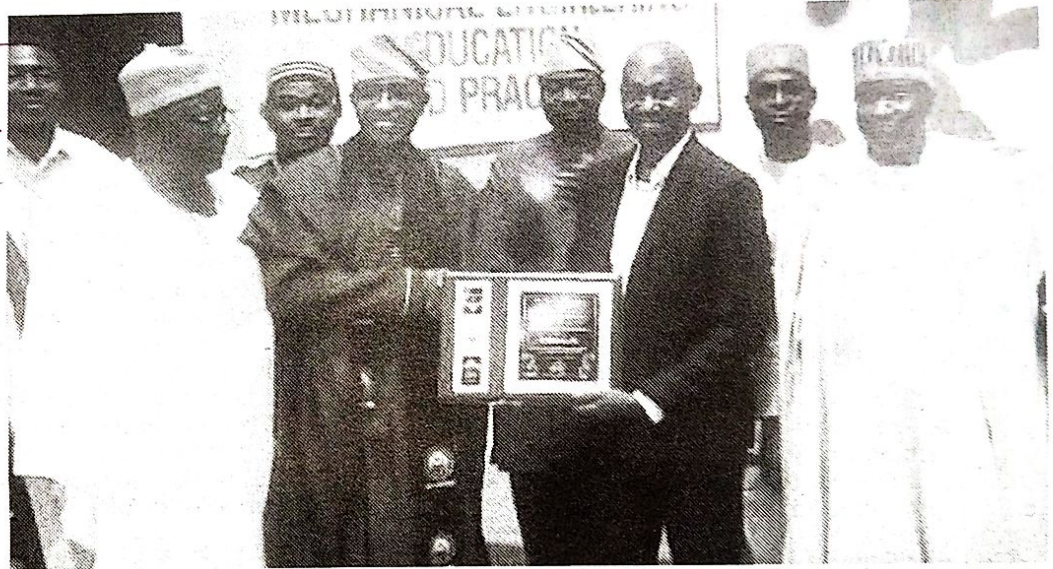
According to him "around 4pm to 5pm on Thursday my people at Ukoloh village were attacked by armed herdsman who killed about 10 people. The worst of it all is that they even killed children below the ages of two.

"They didn't stop at that point but went to three other neighbouring villages/settlements and killed another eight making it a total of 18. The 10 persons were killed in the market while the eight were murdered in the villages when they were running and trying to flee."

The Chairman who commended security operatives for their prompt response

to the distress call from the besieged communities said their timely intervention saved what would have been a massacre in the affected communities.

He said "if they had delayed, the casualty figure would have been much more than what we have because it was a market day and they went there and started shooting at the people.



Mr Adesoji Fagbemi, Group Managing Director, LUBCON (2nd right) displaying Distinguished Award of Excellence for Indigenous Manufacturing given to LUBCON by Nigerian Institute of Mechanical Engineers at the University of Ibadan, International Conference Centre.

10-month-old blackout: Ondo communities threaten to shut down BEDC office

•We'll restore their electricity before Christmas, BEDC assures

By Dayo Johnson,
Akure

Residents of three communities in Ifedore Local Government Area of Ondo state, have threatened to shut down the office of the Benin Electricity Distribution Company (BEDC) in Akure over ten months power outage.

The communities include Irese, Aaye and Ikota, in the council areas of the state.

They said the power outage, which had plunged

the communities into darkness since February 2022, had paralysed the economic, commercial, and social activities of residents in the communities.

They lamented that many business owners in the three affected towns have shut down their shops while artisans who depend on electricity to survive have relocated from the communities.

According to them "some business owners resort to using generators and solar

inverters to power their homes and workplaces.

This was contained in a protest letter signed by the monarch of one of the affected communities, the Olurese of Irese land, Oba Ahmed Destiny Saka, on behalf of the three towns and addressed to the Regional Manager of BEDC, Akure.

They complained that the power outage "has heightened insecurity in the three towns, causing fear in the area, as the power outage threw people into hardship".