

METRO

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Death toll in Benue communities attacks hit 40



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The death toll in the recent attacks by unknown gunmen on Imande Mbakange and other neighbouring communities in Mbacher Council Ward of Kastina-Ala Local Government Area, LGA, of Benue state has risen to over 40.

It would be recalled that no fewer than 28 persons were reportedly killed in the communities by the yet-to-be-identified armed men in the June 3 attack which also led to the burning down of several houses and injury of many in the affected villages.

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Lamenting the heinous killings in the area, a group under the aegis of Shitile Development Association, SDA, Makurdi branch in a cry for help letter to the state government signed by its President, Door Samuel and Secretary General, Zuai Ephraim, made available to newsmen on Thursday, raised the alarm over the unending killings in the affected communities known as Shitile axis of the state.

The group noted that after the June 3 invasion that claimed 28 lives, the Shitile people in the Benue North East District down to parts of Taraba State had come under severe attacks in the last two weeks for no justifiable reasons.

The group listed the names of at least 40 persons killed in the separate attacks carried out simultaneously particularly on June 4 in several communities of Kastina-Ala LGA of the state and appealed to the authorities to stem the bloodbath in the affected communities.

According to the group “after the June 3 attack on Imande Mbakange village market, a total of 28 corpses were picked at different points.” And on the days after “in Michihe Council Ward, six others were slaughtered while another six were killed at Achamegh village, Mbagene Kpav.”

“These wanton killings are now being orchestrated with reckless abandon and mostly at night. Most disturbing also is the fact that the identity of the perpetrators is hardly known nor the reason for their actions disclosed.

“Though due to the fear of general insecurity, it is difficult to move from village to village to gather exact statistics, hordes of lives have been horrendously eliminated in several villages across the land such that the whole land is thrown into wailing and mourning.

“As these barbaric acts continue, our helpless people who escaped death are fleeing the land, deserting their homes and farmlands for safety. We observe sadly also that, as our people are fleeing, herders are occupying these areas and grazing freely on our farms.”

The group appealed to the state government to come to the aid of Shitile people who they claimed were losing their lives and valuables to the yet-to-be-identified killer armed men.

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