

Over 15 killed, residents flee as herders attack Benue communities



...We're under siege, lawmaker laments

By Peter Duru

Makurdi —No fewer than 15 persons were feared killed within three days, following attack by armed herdsmen, who stormed Akpete, Ugbobi, Ijaha, Edikwu Oji and Iyanpu communities in Apa Local Government Area of Benue State.

The attacks also left several persons injured and many others still missing and unaccounted for. It was gathered that the armed men, who have been attacking the communities since Tuesday, destroyed homes and farm produce in the affected communities.

A source, a youth leader in one of the affected communities informed that “the onslaught started on Tuesday, when they attacked a part of Ijaha, where they killed five persons and injured many others. They also burnt down houses and farmland.

“On Wednesday, they again stormed Ediku Oji and Akpete, barricaded the road connecting the village to Ugbokpo, the council headquarters.

“In that attack, they ransacked the village, chased the people out of their ancestral homes after killing two persons and injuring several others.

“Yesterday morning, they moved into Ugbobi village shooting sporadically and for close to three hours, they laid siege to the community and the fear is that about eight persons lost their lives in the attacks, though it could be more than that because the search for bodies is ongoing at the moment.”

Reacting, National Chairman of Apa Development Association, ADA, Mr. Eche Akpoko, said: “The attacks started on Tuesday. The situation is even worst than what we witnessed last year for which we held a press conference.

“It has become a routine and this time around, they have no regard for children and women. In fact, even in international war, there is regard for rules of engagement. Can you imagine that in a village, a hungry lady went to the farm to get tubers of yam, they caught her and butchered her. They do not allow our people to go to farm again, you don't dare step out.”

Related News

Delta: Militant leader who masterminded killing of soldiers in Okuama on the run - Report

Drug trafficking: Court jails Lagos socialite's convicted friend 15 years

Police arrest 2 undergraduates for faking their kidnap

We're under siege, lawmaker laments

Also, the lawmaker representing Apa state constituency in the Benue State House of Assembly, Abu Umoru, who lamented the unending attacks in Apa council, said: “More than 95 percent of a section of the community is displaced already.

“The entire Edikwu community has been displaced. Opaha where I come from, nobody is in the community, Odugbo nobody is there, Akpete, Ikobi, Akpanta, Ochumekwu, Ijaha and Adija communities have all been deserted.

“Everyday they burn houses in Akpete. In the last three days, they have been going to Akpete to burn houses after chasing residents from their ancestral homes. They lay ambush and kill no fewer than five persons on daily basis. The casualty is very high.

“Today, I could not be at plenary in the House, I went to my communities to sympathise with my people and because of the killings, I have developed a problem that I have to go to the hospital to check myself.

“The killings are terrible. Even yesterday (Wednesday), on the highway around Nasarawa Toto leading to Oweto up to Otukpo, between a village called Ojantele and Orozo, the herders put their cows on the road for three hours.

“There was no movement. It was the Hausa people who travel on these big trucks that came down and talked to them before they removed barricade from the road.

“The development is no more a question of moving motion everyday at the state House of Assembly. These killings have gone beyond us. Our representatives at the National Assembly have moved motions countless times, but what has happened? Who do we cry to?

Contacted, the Police Public Relations Officer, Catherine Anene said: “I don't have reports on these attacks.”