

Anger as herdsmen, bandits kill 42 in Benue, Nasarawa, Ondo

●Benue youths protest herdsmen murder of 3 ●Raze LG secretariat, monarch's palace, senator's hotel, others ●Gov Alia appeals to youths, says killers won't escape justice ●Farmers/herders' crisis leave pregnant woman, 19 others dead in Nasarawa ●Protest rocks Ondo over abduction of 9 surveyors ●Ondo govt, police, regent, differ over sack of communities, killing of 20

By Dayo Johnson, Regional Editor, South-West, Peter Duru & Abel Daniel

THREE states - Benue, Nasarawa and Ondo - were rocked by rage and protests, yesterday, over the killing of no fewer than 28 persons by herdsmen and bandits.

A pregnant woman was among 20 persons killed during farmers/herders' clash that left scores wounded, houses, motorcycles, and police operational vehicle set ablaze in Nasarawa LGA of Nasarawa State.

At press time, the Nasarawa Police said they had recovered six bodies, while a witness said no fewer than 20 people died and many remained missing.

Market women and youths took to the streets over the kidnap of nine surveyors as Ondo State Government, the Police and regent differed over the sack-

ing of four communities and killing of 20 in Akure North LGA by bandits.

Indeed, there was pandemonium in Gwer West LGA of Benue State as irate youths, yesterday morning burnt down the council secretariat in Naka and the Palace of the Chairman of Gwer West traditional council, HRH Daniel Abomtse, over alleged murder of three members of the Civil Protection Guards by suspected armed herdsmen on Monday.

The trio were on duty at On-MbaAondo, Tsambe-Mbesev Ward of the LGA when they were killed.

The mob also allegedly razed other properties in the town, including a hotel belonging to the lawmaker representing Benue North West in the Senate, Sena-

tor Titus Zam.

It was gathered that the angry youths took to the streets as early as 7am when the bodies of the three murdered local security personnel were brought to Naka for burial.

According to a source, "the youths were not only angered by the murder of the three local security personnel but the fact that government is not doing enough to check the unending incursions and killings in Gwer West LGA by armed herdsmen.

"What you see happening today (yesterday) is a revolt and demonstration of bottled up anger over the activities of armed herdsmen in Gwer West communities and the failure of the authorities to check the menace."

Hoodlums hijacked protest

— OMIRIN, COUNCIL CHAIRMAN

Confirming the development, the Chairman of Gwer West LGA, Victor Omirin, said the protest, started by youths in Naka, was later hijacked by hoodlums, "and they burnt down the local government secretariat and the Ter Nagi's palace."

He explained that the crisis was triggered by "the murder of three members of Civil Protection Guards, who were killed in Gyaluwa community by armed herdsmen, so when their bodies were brought to Naka, it sparked protest from the youths which was taken over by hoodlums."

Contacted, Special Adviser to the Governor on Internal Security, Chief Joseph Har, said the attacked community is the home of the security adviser to the governor (External) Col. Alex Ashungyu,