

11 killed in fresh herders' attack in Benue



Two soldiers, three others killed in ambush by armed herdsman in Benue

..the evil will be defeated – NSA
..says President Tinubu met a bad situation
...this is a carnage and we're helpless – Gov Alia
..Tiv, Idoma paramount rulers summon a meeting of subjects
By Peter Duru, Makurdi

11 persons have been reportedly killed in a renewed attack on Afia community in the Ukum Local Government Area, LGA, of Benue State.

This came as the National Security Adviser, NSA, Mallam Nuhu Ribadu, lamented that President Bola Tinubu met a bad security situation and is working hard to fix the country.

Speaking at a meeting with the visiting NSA and selected stakeholders at the Benue Government House, Makurdi, the Ter Ukum, HRH Iyorkaa Kaave, disclosed that the marauders attacked Afia in the early hours of Tuesday.

He said "The armed herdsmen attacked Afia in the early hours of today, and 11 bodies have been recovered from that community so far, and we are still searching. "Please tell President Tinubu that we will not live with murderers as herdsmen. These are not the herdsmen we used to know, who lived peacefully with us in the past."

Addressing the gathering, Mallam Ribadu, who commiserated with the people over the killings, assured that the evil would be defeated.

He said: "We will defeat it. The entire country is with you. I commiserate with the Benue People and assure you this is a trying period for all of us, we are 100 per cent with you.

"We will confront it. Benue is an extremely important state in Nigeria. We must fight and maintain Benue as a peaceful state. "The Governor is doing well, and we will support him. It is unfortunate, but it happens sometimes.

"Our armed forces are doing well. It is impossible to post soldiers or police to every hamlet. Give us the chance and stop politicising the killings. This will help us restore peace. The issue of security is relative.

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"We inherited an extremely bad government, and things have improved, and we will address all these issues cropping up. It is a matter of time; to harm is easy, but solving it is difficult. We have considerably reduced the number of violent incidents we have encountered. This one, too, we will confront it."

Governor Hyacinth Alia, who decried the activities of the marauders in the state since 2011, said the state was under siege.

According to him, "these people do not have any reason to live with normal people. We are faced with a series of losses of lives, farmlands and property. We have 17 IDP camps in the State. It becomes difficult to get our IDPS back to their ancestral homes.

"Sankera is our headquarters of food. The attacks have been persistent and continuous. Instead of a good Friday, we had a black Friday with venomous attacks on Katsina-Ala, Ukum and Logo LGAs

"It is quite devastating. It is telling on us. 72 lives lost. It is a terrible moment for us. I have always established contact with the NSA. Our security agencies have worked assiduously to curtail the attacks. We need help like yesterday. The President has been very supportive, and we hope that support will come.

"We have bought 100 hilux vehicles to support conventional security agencies, and bought 600 motorcycles. This is a carnage. Attack is more of an onion layer, it is vicious. We ask that support be upped. We will collaborate with the Federal Government to stop the killings. What we are experiencing is a bare-faced attack as the attackers speak Fulani and Hausa. It is a troubling trend. It is a deliberate attempt, they disbalance the people, kill a good number of them and occupy.

"The attacks are under-reported. We are helpless. We do not have AK-47. We are defenceless. We tell the people to be law-abiding, and the attackers take advantage of this. We are not in a banana Republic."

Meanwhile, the two paramount rulers of the State, the Tor Tiv VI, His Royal Majesty, James Ayatse and the Och'Idoma, His Royal Majesty, Dr. John Odogbo, Monday summoned a meeting of stakeholders of the two major tribes in the state to discuss the security challenges confronting the people.

The meeting summoned by the Tor Tiv, which was held at his palace in Gboko had in attendance prominent individuals of Tiv extraction, including Governor Alia, former Governors Sameul Ortom, Gabriel Suswam, serving Federal and State Assembly members, political appointees, leaders and stakeholders from the 14 Tiv-speaking LGAs of the state.

Though details of the meeting were not made public, the Tor Tiv expressed optimism that the attendance and commitment shown to the course of the Tiv people by the leaders were encouraging.

Similarly, the meeting summoned by the Och'Idoma, which was held in Oshim, had

Similarly, the meeting summoned by the Ocn Idoma, which was held in Otukpo, had in attendance prominent sons of the nine Idoma and Iggede speaking people of the state.

It was reliably gathered that the meeting also discussed the recent armed herdsmen incursions in Idoma land and sundry issues.