

4 killed as police, youths clash in Kogi community after bandits' attack

From Tijani Labaran, Lokoja

Four persons were killed on Wednesday in Irunda-Ile community in Isanlu, Yagba East Local Government Area of Kogi State.

While bandits killed two vigilante members during an early-morning attack on the community, two protesters later died after being hit by stray bullets fired by security operatives.

Eyewitnesses said the security personnel opened fire on youths who were protesting over rising insecurity following a violent

bandit attack on the community earlier in the day.

Two youths were confirmed dead, while two others were said to be on life support after the confrontation with security operatives.

According to the Bobagunwa of Irunda-Isanlu, Chief David Oni Sunday, the bandits attacked the community in the early hours of Wednesday, killing two vigilante members during a confrontation.

He explained that the youths clashed with police officers deployed to the area over what

they described as a delay in pursuing the bandits into the bush shortly after their arrival.

"In the melee that followed, two youths were hit by stray bullets, while another two were hospitalised after excessive inhalation of tear gas fired by the police.

"In all, four people were killed today in the community. The bandits killed two vigilantes, and the police mistakenly killed two other persons," he said.

The Security Adviser to the Kogi State Government, Commander Jerry Omodara

(rtd), confirmed the incident to journalists.

He said the bandits invaded the community in the early hours of the morning and killed two vigilante personnel during the confrontation.

He added that he had expected the youths to support security operatives rather than engage them in confrontation at such a critical time.

"Security men were deployed to Yagba to chase the bandits away. Even those bandits occupying our mine sites have been neutralised by the security men.

"Kogi State Government will not allow any criminals in the state. We are working hard to ensure Kogi remains safe for everyone.

"Some days ago, a helicopter was deployed to those areas, and we recorded major successes. The bandits were neutralised. We will not rest until they are completely eliminated," he said.

Efforts to reach the Kogi State Police Command spokesperson, CSP William Aya, were unsuccessful, as he did not respond to calls or text messages at the time of filing this report.