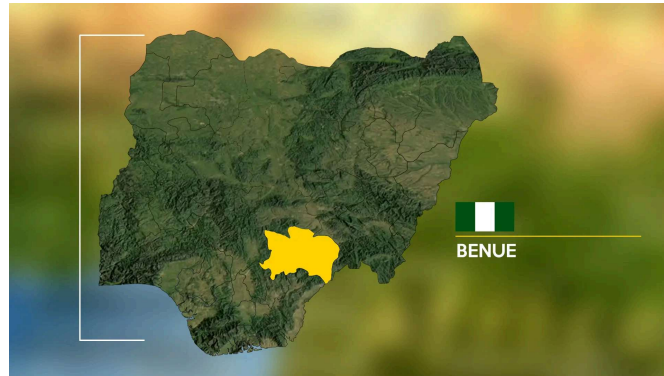


Former PDP Assembly Candidate, 4 Others Killed In Benue



By Hope Abah

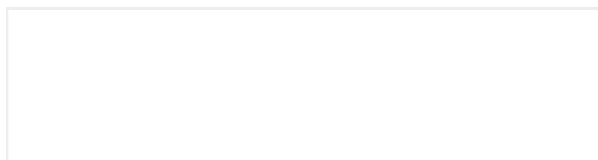
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Five people, including a former Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) House of Assembly candidate for Otukpo-Akpa constituency, Igbabe Ochi, were killed in the early hours of Tuesday when gunmen attacked Otobi community in Otukpo Local Government Area (LGA) of Benue State.

The latest attack, which occurred at about 1:30am came barely two days after a kidnap attempt in Ekwu-Ora Odaba area of Otobi was foiled by community volunteer guards.

Locals said Otobi has increasingly become a target of suspected armed invaders, following a deadly attack on April 15, 2025, when 13 residents were killed, and another incident in May 2025 that claimed three lives.



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The latest killings according to residents occurred after volunteer guards and youths maintained patrols and surveillance across the community until midnight on Monday before withdrawing to rest.

“When the surveillance team covering the railway crossing toward the Ijami axis pulled back around 1:30am, the gunmen stormed the community and began shooting indiscriminately,” a villager who craved anonymity said.

“Five people were killed, while foodstuffs and other valuables were looted,” the local added.

Confirming the incident, President of the Otobi Community Development Association (OCDA), John Anyebe, told journalists in Makurdi that the attackers accessed the community through the railway station bridge from the Ijami side of Otobi.

“They first shot a person near the water board before moving to the transformer junction where Honourable Igbabe Ochi and four others were seated and opened fire on them. They also looted nearby shops for food and other items,” he said.

Anyebe lamented the repeated killings in the community, recalling the April 15, 2025 massacre and the subsequent killing of three persons at the Omebe axis of Otobi barely two weeks later.

The Police Public Relations Officer in Benue State, DSP Udeme Edet, confirmed the killings. However, he put the figure of casualties at four.

Edet said, “We can confirm that an incident occurred earlier today at Otobi-Akpa. Tragically, four individuals have lost their lives.

“Our thoughts and deepest condolences are with the family and loved ones affected by this incident.

“Investigation is in progress, and efforts are being made to arrest the perpetrators to face justice.”

Also, the Special Adviser to the Benue State Governor on Security and Internal Affairs, Chief Joseph Har, confirmed to journalists in Makurdi that suspected armed herders who maybe looking for food for their kidnapped victims attacked a provision shop in Otobi-Akpa community, Otukpo LGA at 1:30am, killing the four persons and looting food items.

He added, “The attackers fled into a nearby forest after residents raised alarm. Police and Civil Protection Guards were immediately deployed to prevent further attacks. The victims were identified as Hon. Ochi Ugbabe, Achibi Onah, Eje Eba and Sunday Iruja.”

Har also noted that four persons kidnapped earlier in the community are yet to be released.

Meanwhile, the lawmaker representing Otukpo-Akpa constituency at the State Assembly, Kennedy Angbo, has decried the persistent attacks on his people.

Speaking to journalists in Makurdi, he disclosed that on Sunday evening, gunmen attacked a Benue Links bus at the Burnt Bricks area of Otukpo, leaving three passengers injured.

“Five of my people have again been killed in Otobi community, barely a year after 13 others were murdered on April 15, 2025.

“I am calling on security agencies to intensify intelligence gathering and counter-operations to flush these terrorists out of our area,” Angbo said.