

Benue: Troops kill two bandits, arrest four suspects

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Troops of Operation Whirl Stroke, OPWS, have neutralised two suspected terrorists and arrested four suspected cattle rustlers in Agatu and Guma Local Government Areas of Benue.

According to the statement made available to newsmen on Sunday by the acting Media Information Officer of the OPWS, Lieutenant Ahmad Zubairu, troops of the Chief of Army Staff Special Intervention Battalion IX operating under Operation Whirl Stroke were deployed to Obagaji after receiving credible intelligence regarding suspected cattle rustling activities around the Omikwidi general area.

Lt Zubairu who said that the troops which acted swiftly moved towards the Ologba–Egba road and deployed in ambush position. added that three suspected cattle rustlers were arrested and the stolen livestock were recovered during a routine patrol operation conducted around Obagaji in Agatu LGA of Benue.

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According to the statement, “During the operation, troops successfully intercepted a Sienna bus conveying three fully grown cows suspected to have been rustled.

“Three suspects were immediately arrested.

The suspects were identified as Mamuda Hussein, 28, a native of Adagbo community; Sunday Moses, 35, from Obagaji village; and Teny Musa, 22, also from Obagaji.

The acting media officer said that the preliminary investigations revealed that the cattle were being transported using a vehicle bearing a fake Kogi State Government registration number plate, Kogi 2LMA 35 LGA.

He added that the suspected gang leader, Mamuda Hussein, reportedly confessed that he had been invited to purchase the rustled cattle by two individuals identified as Dahiru and Small.

The statement further stated that the troops of COAS Intervention Battalion XV further conducted an ambush operation at Abuja Village following intelligence on terrorist movement within the area.

“During the operation, troops made contact with the terrorists. In the ensuing engagement, one armed criminal was neutralised while others fled the scene,” the statement read.

Lt. Zubairu added that the troops deployed at Abuja Village on March 5, came under attack by suspected terrorists but troops responded and successfully repelled the assault, forcing the attackers to withdraw, ‘one terrorist was neutralised during the encounter,’ the the statement further read.

Also on March, 7 during another operation troops of the Maritime Component of OPWS at Gbajimba in Guma LGA while acting on information provided by a local source concerning suspected cattle rustlers attempted to escape through waterways after stealing cows belonging to members of the community.

He said, "Troops immediately mobilised to the location and intercepted the suspects attempting to flee by boat. Warning shots were fired, leading to the arrest of one suspect with two stolen cows inside the boat."

Lt Zubairu who listed recovered items during the separate operations to include, boat, livestock and one round of 7.62mm special ammunition from the bag of one of the neutralised suspects said that the arrested suspects are currently in the custody for investigation and further processing.

The Force Commander Joint Task Force Operation Whirl Stroke, Maj. Gen. Moses Gara, reassured residents of Benue and neighbouring states that the Joint Task Force remains committed to protecting lives and property.

He urged members of the public to continue providing timely and credible information to security agencies to enhance ongoing operations against criminal elements within the Joint Operations Area.