

Three killed in Benue communal clash

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| By John Charles

Three people were reportedly killed in a communal clash that rocked Ugambe and Mbaiose communities in Konshisha and Gwer East Local Government Areas of Benue State, respectively.

Residents of the warring communities were reported to have engaged in a shootout, leading to the death of three people.

The incident, according to a resident in Aliade who simply identified himself as Ager, said the prompt response of the troops of Operation Whirl Stroke saved the situation.

Ager said, “There had been incessant clashes between communities in Konshisha and Gwer East Local Government Areas.

“Late Wednesday, there was a fresh communal clash between Ugambe and Mbaiaase communities of Konshisha and Gwer East LGAs, leading to the death of three people.”

The acting Media Officer of OPWS, Lieutenant Ahmad Zubairu, in a statement on Friday, confirmed the incident and death of three people.

The OPWS spokesman said that troops responded swiftly to a distress call on Wednesday about a communal clash between the Ugambe and Mbaiaase communities.

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He added that at the time the troops got to the scene, militias who dressed in black engaged the soldiers in a gun battle but fled due to superior force.

The statement partly read, “On arrival at the scene, the troops came under sporadic fire from some armed elements dressed in black. The assailants fled into nearby bushes after troops returned fire with superior force.

“Sadly, three civilians were killed and one was injured before the arrival of the troops. The wounded victim was promptly evacuated to General Hospital Aliade for medical attention, while the remains of the deceased were deposited in the hospital mortuary.”

Lt Zubairu listed items recovered from the fleeing militias to include one magazine, eight rounds of 7.62x39mm special ammunition, twelve rounds of 7.62x51mm NATO ammunition, 15 empty ammunition shells, and various charms.

The spokesman said that the OPWS force Major General Moses Gara, while commending the troops for their swift response and professionalism in restoring calm in the warring communities, also urged them to remain vigilant and sustain aggressive patrols across the area to prevent a recurrence.

He added that the force commander appealed to community leaders and stakeholders in both localities to embrace dialogue to resolve their differences peacefully and work collectively toward lasting peace.