

# Three arrested over killing in Benue community

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By John Charles

Three suspects believed to be behind the recent attack on the Anwule community in Ohinmini Local Government Area of Benue State have been arrested.

PUNCH Metro gathered on Monday that the arrest was effected by the police in collaboration with local vigilante members.

No fewer than six people, including a pastor, were killed in the Anwule community about three weeks ago.

The arrested suspects were identified as Isah Peter and Moses Peter, both natives of Agatu LGA and a Fulani herdsman, who were apprehended on Sunday after weeks of investigation.

Isah, 22, who reportedly served as the acting commander of the Eguma community vigilante group, allegedly used a community-owned firearm to carry out operations in Anwule.

According to a source who pleaded for confidentiality, Isah confessed that he acted on the instructions of a man known only as “Pepper,” who allegedly directed him to provide the weapon used in the attack.

He was also said to have admitted to orchestrating several recent kidnapping incidents along the Otukpo–Adoka–Oweto

Road.

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Confirming the arrest, Chairman of Agatu Local Government Area, Melvin James, on Monday, told our correspondent that he read about the arrest of the trio on social media while acknowledging that two of the suspects were indigenes of Agatu.

The chairman expressed concern about how the suspects could collude with armed bandits to kill their own people, including members of their community.

He said, "I can confirm that two persons (of the three suspects) are from Eguma and Igila communities in Agatu. However, I dare to state that no community in Agatu has weapons.

"Agatu depends on the security provided by soldiers and police. No community in Agatu sent them. It goes to confirm my position that there are bad eggs in the community. The police should thoroughly investigate them because they must have accomplices. That's my position."

Also confirming the arrest on Monday, Chairman of Ohimini LGA, Adole Gabriel, said that all the arrests were made by local vigilante groups.

Adole added that in the past 24 hours, Operation Whirl Stroke (OPWS) operatives had also made additional arrests of suspects terrorising his area.

He said, "Altogether, four separate arrests have been made in the past 24 hours. The suspects have been taken into police custody in Makurdi."

*Efforts to get the reaction of the state command spokesperson, DSP Udeme Edet, were not successful as she did not pick up her calls, even as her phone rang out.*