

# Three suspected criminals killed in Benue — Army

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By John Charles

Troops of Operation Whirl Stroke (OPWS) covering Nasarawa, Benue, and Taraba States have killed three criminals in Ukum Local Government Area of Benue State.

The killed criminals reportedly belonged to a notorious syndicate responsible for widespread insecurity, including repeated kidnappings across Ukum LGA.

This was contained in a statement issued by the acting Media Information Officer of OPWS, Lieutenant Ahmad Zubairu, and made available to journalists on Friday. The statement said the troops, in coordinated efforts with other security operatives, foiled an ambush mounted by the criminals.

The statement read partly, “The security team moved swiftly to confront a criminal group that had erected an illegal roadblock along the route connecting Aturuku, Wembe and Ayati villages in Borkyo Council Ward, Ukum Local Government Area of Benue State.

“On making contact with the criminals, the troops engaged them decisively, resulting in the killing of three criminals, while others fled into nearby bushes.”

Lt. Zubairu added: “Subsequent findings revealed that the three killed individuals belonged to a notorious syndicate responsible for widespread insecurity, including repeated kidnappings across Ukum LGA.

“Their activities are believed to be connected to recent abduction cases reported around the Zaki-Biam yam market vicinity.”

He further said that the deceased suspects, Sughter Abelebe and Sughnen Abelebe, both from Ugbaam Council Ward, and the third from Tse Kpeakaa, Kundav Council, were later identified by community members.

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“Sources have also linked the group to a notorious bandit kingpin, who is known to operate within the Shitile axis of Katsina-Ala LGA,” the statement read partly.

Lt. Zubairu said that two motorcycles were recovered from the criminals while a search continues to apprehend those who fled.

The OPWS Force Commander, Maj. Gen. Moses Gara applauded the synergy among the security personnel and commended their courage, discipline, and professional conduct throughout the mission.

He also encouraged the troops to maintain operational drive, deepen intelligence-led operations, and reinforce security presence in high-risk communities.

General Gara reaffirmed the unwavering commitment of OPWS to defending lives, enhancing civil authority, and restoring lasting peace across the Joint Operations Area.

The OPWS troops have, in recent times, been curtailing bandit and criminal activities in the Sankera axis, known as a flashpoint of criminality within the state.

In November, the troops conducted a snap raid on the hideout of a notorious armed bandit in Mbagen Community, Ukum LGA, and killed one of the bandits while the gang leader narrowly escaped.