

# Troops of OPWS neutralise two armed bandits in Benue

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## •Uncover illegal arms factory in Nasarawa

From **Scholastica Hir**, Makurdi

**Troops of COAS Special Intervention Battalion IX under the auspices of Joint Task Force Operation Whirl Stroke (OPWS) have neutralised two suspected armed bandits along the Naka–Ahume–Makurdi Road in Benue State.**

The Force Commander, JTF OPWS, Major General Moses Gara disclosed this in a statement signed by the acting Media Information Officer, Lieutenant Ahmad Zubairu, said the operational success was recorded during a snap ambush operation conducted yesterday.

Gara explained that the troops, deployed at Naka, were on routine fighting patrol when they acted on credible intelligence regarding the presence of armed bandits operating within the area.

Consequently, troops tactically laid ambush along the identified route and made contact with the criminals.

He said during the encounter, "three suspected armed bandits were sighted. Two were neutralised, while the third escaped with gunshot wounds. Consequently, one AK-47 rifle loaded with six rounds of 7.62mm special ammunition was recovered at the scene."

Meanwhile, troops of Sector 2, Joint Task Force Operation Whirl Stroke (OPWS) have uncovered an illegal arms factory in Agwatashi, Doma LG, Nasarawa State.

Gara, in a statement signed by the acting Media Information Officer, Lieutenant Ahmad Zubairu, said preliminary investigations showed that the location served as an illegal arms manufacturing site supplying criminal elements with firearms within and beyond the area.

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According to him, the troops have sustained an aggressive operational tempo in their fight against criminality, and recorded the success during a fighting and confidence-building patrol in Agwatashi, Doma LG, Nasarawa State.

The Commander said the troops deployed at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Idadu, were conducting routine patrols aimed at denying criminal elements freedom of action when they uncovered a concealed location suspected to be used for the illegal manufacture of locally fabricated weapons.

He said: “Upon approaching the area, the troops encountered several individuals who fled on sighting the patrol. However, one suspect, Baba Ogar, a 26-year-old from Arusu village in Kokona LGA, was apprehended while attempting to evade arrest by hiding on top of a tree.

“A thorough search of the site led to the recovery of six locally fabricated pistols, assorted tools and instruments believed to be used in the production of illegal weapons, the sum of N40,500, and a mobile phone found in the possession of the suspect.”

The arrested suspect is currently in custody, while investigations have been intensified to track down and apprehend other fleeing accomplices connected to the criminal activity.

The Force Commander, commended the troops for their professionalism, vigilance and sustained operational pressure, which culminated in the discovery of the illegal arms production facility.

He charged them to maintain the momentum and continue to rely on intelligence-driven operations to dismantle criminal networks within the Joint Operations Area.

Gara further emphasised the critical role of public cooperation, urging residents to continue to provide timely and credible intelligence, noting that actionable information remains vital to achieving lasting security that will engender economic growth.