

## Benue: Death toll in armed men attack on police checkpoint rises to two



**By Peter Duru, Makurdi**

**A personnel of the Nigeria Forest and Hunters Services, identified as Abechi Oche, has died from injuries sustained during an armed attack on a security checkpoint along the Otukpo-Ohimini road in Benue State.**

**His death was made known by a family source who did not want to be mentioned because he was not authorised to speak to the media on the issue.**

Oche's death comes barely 72 hours after a police officer, who was earlier wounded in the same incident, was confirmed dead.

The attack, which occurred around midnight on Thursday, claimed the life of Inspector Akpan Ogbole of the Operation Zenda Joint Task Force (JTF). Both men were part of the team on a stop-and-search operation alongside other security operatives when they reportedly came under heavy gunfire from unidentified assailants.

Sources in the area said the gunmen stormed the checkpoint unexpectedly and opened fire on the personnel on duty, triggering a fierce exchange of gunshots.

"In the shootout, both officers suffered fatal gunshot wounds," the source said, adding that the attackers fled the scene with an AK-47 rifle belonging to the police and a pump-action gun assigned to the Forest and Hunters Services.

The victims were rushed to the Otukpo General Hospital, where Inspector Ogbole was confirmed dead on arrival. Oche was initially stabilised and placed on treatment after being mistaken for dead.

However, he later succumbed to his injuries at the facility. The latest death brings the casualty figure from the attack to two.

The Police Public Relations Officer for Benue State Command, DSP Udeme Edet, said investigations had commenced to uncover the identities of the attackers. But the Command was yet to announce any arrests as of the time of filing this report.

