

Gunmen ambush, kill ex-Benue SSG



Salifu

By Peter Duru

Former Benue Secretary to the State Government (SSG), Prof. David Salifu, has been killed after suspected armed men ambushed and shot him along the Wukari–Joota Road in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area, LGA, a border community between Benue and Taraba states.

Salifu, a Professor of Public Administration and former Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the Federal University Wukari, was reportedly travelling to Makurdi for the burial of his uncle when he encountered the attackers.

He sustained gunshot injuries during the attack and was initially rushed to a hospital in Wukari, where doctors removed bullets from his stomach. He was later transferred to the Federal Medical Centre (FMC), Makurdi, but succumbed to his injuries at about midnight on Thursday.

A former aide to the deceased, Mr. Ben Ekah, who confirmed the incident, said Salifu and his driver were returning to Benue from the Federal University Wukari when they were ambushed.

According to him, the driver’s account revealed that the gunmen stopped their vehicle, dragged the former SSG out and attempted to whisk him away.

“The driver said they were coming from the Federal University Wukari where Prof. Salifu lectures when they were waylaid along the Wukari–Joota Road, a border route between Taraba and Benue states.

“The attackers were trying to take him away, and he kept asking them what they wanted. As they continued dragging him, one of them suddenly pulled out a gun and shot him at close range in the stomach.

“They abandoned him after the shooting, leaving him in a pool of blood. His driver, however, managed to take him back to Wukari, where surgeons successfully removed the bullets from his stomach.

“On Thursday, he was referred to the Federal Medical Centre in Makurdi for further treatment, but sadly he passed away around midnight,” Ekah said.

He described the late Professor as a humble and peace-loving man, noting that he had left a Senate meeting at the university to attend his uncle’s burial before the fatal attack.

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“He was a lecturer and Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the Federal University Wukari. We learnt that the university management was holding a Senate meeting, but he excused himself to travel home for his uncle’s burial. It is heartbreaking because everyone knew him as a peaceful man,” Ekah added.

Prof. Salifu served as Benue State’s Secretary to the State Government during the administration of former Governor Gabriel Suswam between January 2011 and May 2015.

The Benue State Police Public Relations Officer, DSP Udeme Edet, could not be reached at the time of this report.