

Jos:

Ward head seized by JTF found dead

From Andrew Agbese & Mahmud Lalo, Jos

THE body of a ward head taken away from his Jos residence Saturday night by soldiers of the Special Task Force was yesterday morning traced to the mortuary of the Jos

University Teaching Hospital, his relations told journalists.

Alhaji Ahmadu Ali Kazaure, a retired army major, a former member of the Plateau State House of Assembly and until yesterday the ward head of Ali Kazaure area

of Jos, was seized along with many others when the STF men raided Lasisi Makanju Street of Jos North following the killing of a soldier in the area.

Witnesses said an unknown assailant hacked the soldier to death, who was iden-

tified as Sgt. Baba Wuya, and escaped.

According to witnesses, as residents retired for the night the STF men stormed the area, burst into peoples' houses, herded them outside and hurled them unto their

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truck. The STF refused to comment on the incident. Repeated phone calls to the spokesman Captain Charles Ekeocha were not answered or returned. Later, the STF issued a statement about the soldier's death but no mention was made about the ward head's killing.

Earlier in the morning, news of the ward head's death began to filter out, and the search for his corpse ended up at the teaching hospital mortuary where his remains and that of another young man, Ibrahim Ahmadu, were found.

Mortuary attendants told relations that the corpses were deposited at about 10pm on Saturday by men of the task force who told them they were found along Riyom - Abuja Road.

Investigation revealed that members of the task force who deposited the corpses did not enter their names nor put any information except that the corpses were found along Riyom - Abuja road.

Our correspondent who saw the corpses reported that they bore injuries. There was a deep cut

on the forehead of the late Alhaji Ahmadu Ali Kazaure.

Many people were said to have been injured in the military raid where small children, men, women and the aged were allegedly beaten and taken away to the STF headquarters.

"They used their gun butts and their boots to break our doors while we were sleeping. Women and children and the aged were dragged out of the bed and asked to lie down on our street. Even children aged seven were arrested, they put us inside a Hilux vehicle putting us on top of each other," Dr. Isa Modibbo, a resident of the area who was also whisked away by the task force but later released, told our correspondent.

Another victim Muhammad Sani said, "I was sleeping when I saw a soldier by my bed side. I was speechless when I saw him, I was wearing nothing on me but I manage to wear a pair of pants and they dragged me outside and shoved me into a waiting van, kicking and beating with their guns and boots.... They piled us inside the van on top of one another."

Tunde Buhari, who sustained

a knee injury, urged the Federal Government to investigate the incident.

The victims alleged that the Alhaji Ahmadu died before they reached the STF headquarters as many people were heaped on him after he was badly beaten.

Most of the arrested people were released early Sunday morning after spending the night at the STF headquarters, residents said, adding that there were about seven other people still being held as at yesterday afternoon.

State Commissioner of Police Emmanuel Diipo Ayeni said he could not comment on the matter as yesterday being a Sunday was a work-free day.

In announcing the killing of the soldier, Captain Ekeocha said in the statement: "A soldier serving with the Special Task Force was matchetted to death by unidentified person along Lasisi street, Ali Kazaure area of Jos and his weapon carted away. The soldier, Sgt. Baba Wuya, was on his way to check another of his guard post when the incident occurred.

"The soldier was murdered in cold blood ostensibly by the same people he is trying to protect. His

murder borders on criminality and that is why his rifle which is the target of the killing was carted away. This weapon will in turn be used to perpetrate crimes on the innocent citizens of Jos and its environs."

Residents of the area said an assailant stabbed the now dead soldier and fled with his rifle. The people tried to grab him, but he overpowered them and the gun he took away was later found in a shrub near a river between Anguwar Rogo and the Ali Kazaure area.

At the residence of the late Alhaji Ahmadu, his brother Auwalu confirmed the death of the ward head and called for a thorough investigation. Also, brother to the late Ibrahim Yusuf, Alhaji Kabiru, urged for thorough investigation into what he called "an act of injustice."

The late Alhaji Ahmadu retired in from the Army in the early 1980's and joined politics, where he won an election in 1983 into the Plateau State House of Assembly. He took over as ward head from his late father Alhaji Ali Kazaure in 1985. He was 63 years old.