

5 killed as military storm bandits' den in Benue

From Hope Abah Emmanuel, Makurdi

The Nigerian military under the Operation Whirl Stroke (OPWS) yesterday reportedly killed five armed bandits in an aerial and ground operations after they (bandits) attacked a community in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State.

Our correspondent gathered that some of the bandits were severely injured by the soldiers who raided their hideouts within the borders of Benue and Nasarawa states.

It was also learnt that the bandits had earlier attacked villagers at Anune, a rural community along Naka road on the

outskirts of Makurdi LGA and allegedly killed unspecified number of people.

A witness told our correspondent that a military helicopter was seen hovering around the affected village between 9am and 10am yesterday just as soldiers and police trooped-in in trucks.

The witness added that the security operatives drove into the forest area where the alleged bandits had earlier retreated into and that before long, the soldiers' were seen returning with at least five dead bodies of the suspected attackers in their vehicles which again passed through the village.

Another villager alleged that the bandits invaded the community at about 4am yesterday during which they fired

gunshots sporadically while residents were still asleep.

The villager said he could not yet ascertain how many persons were killed but that some people were felled by the bandits while those injured have been taken to the hospital, stressing that the locals are cooperating with security operatives to fish out the attackers from their hide out.

Meanwhile, the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), DSP Catherine Anene, has confirmed the attack on Anune village but yet to ascertain if there were casualties.

The Force Commander of OPWS, Major General Adeyemi Yekini, could not be reached at the time of filing this report.