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CROSS RIVERS, DELTA

Gunmen ransack Cross River communities, kill 3

Eyo Charles, Calabar

Gunmen in army uniform have unleashed mayhem on Utanga and other communities close to the famous Obudu Cattle Ranch Resort in Obalinku LGA of Cross River State.

An eyewitness, a youth leader, Prince Agom Osim said that the gunmen, numbering about 20, were heavily armed with sophisticated weapons.

According to him, lack of telecommunications signals in those communities hampered efforts to get help to them.

The incident happened

yesterday at about 10am.

He said: "They attacked and robbed five communities close to Utanga. We were not aware that there was such an incident going on as there is no mobile phone network in the area.

"After that, they drove through the road to Utanga, robbing from shops to shops, residential houses and attacking unsuspecting people.

"At first, shop owners thought they were military men, not until they started shooting indiscriminately.

"They entered shops, beat up those who attempted to resist them. A young man from Utanga

was shot dead in the process. We hear that two others were similarly killed in another community."

According to Agom, a fuel station worker who tried to argue with the gang was stabbed and sustained a deep cut on his head.

Another youth leader in Utanga, Adie Simon said he saw the gunmen seizing motorcycles from some villagers.

Utanga natives lamented the lack of telecommunication network in Utanga and lack of any security presence.

The Chairman of Obanliku LGA, Mrs Margaret Inde, described the attack as barbaric and gruesome.

She condoled with the families of the dead and sympathised with the other victims.

Inde said she had dispatched a team to visit victims who were hospitalised as a result of the incident.

She called for calm and assured that efforts are on to bring perpetrators to book.

She called on security agencies to beef up security in the area against further attacks.

Meanwhile, the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) in Obanliku, Mr. Elemi Bassey confirmed the arrest of one person in connection with the mayhem.