

Tiv group accuses military of extra judicial killing in Benue

From Hope Abah Emmanuel, Makurdi

● Allegation false – Military

A Tiv organisation, Ayatutu Cultural and Social Development Initiative (AYACASODI) Worldwide, on Sunday accused the Nigerian Army of carrying out an operation which led to the killing of one person in Jootar community of Ukum Local Government Area in Benue State.

It said the inhumane attack was carried out on unarmed Tiv people in Jootar on Wednesday by the men of Operation Whilist Stroke (OPWS) based in Chonko

and Wukari in Wukari LGA, Taraba State.

The national president of the organisation, Chief Timothy Baaki; national secretary, David Nyiagee; and national publicity secretary, Peter Orga, made the allegation in a joint statement made available to journalists in Makurdi.

The group noted that soldiers from Wukari in Taraba State came to Jootar to confiscate motorcycles and their attempts were initially resisted by the people who

stood their ground that they were free by law to ride motorcycles.

The statement said despite the resistance, the soldiers succeeded in taking away some motorcycles from the rightful owners to Wukari which informed a peaceful protest by the people for the release of their bikes.

“It is very unfortunate and sad that we have to inform you that, without provoked actions from the protesters, those army personnel, after

sporadic shooting, aimed and shot at the people, resulting to the immediate death of Mr Imongo Verve, while Mr Aondoawase Abeda sustained serious bullet injuries. The rest escaped death and injuries by God’s grace.

“We hereby condemn the illegal acts in totality, and call on: The Minister of Defence; Chief of Defence Staff; CO 72 Battalion Makurdi; CO 93 Battalion Takum; The National Human Rights Commission; His Excellency

Gen. Muhammadu Buhari, President and Commander in Chief of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, to order and ensure the thorough investigation of the incident,” the group stated.

When contacted, the Force Commander of OPWS, Major General Kevin Aligbe, said the allegations were false, adding that anyone found wanting would be dealt with according to the dictates of the law.

Aligbe explained to journalists in Makurdi, that, “This statement (by the group) is not true as there are several generalisations. I am aware there was a misunderstanding on the said date and I have ordered an investigation into it.

“The commanders in the general area have been invited already. If anyone is found wanting, the law will take its course, be assured.”