

Army Confirms Killing Of Soldiers In Benue Attack

Force Commander of Operation Whirl Stroke (OPWS), Major General Sunday Igbinomwanhia, on Saturday confirmed that two soldiers and an operative of the Nigeria Security and...



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Force Commander of Operation Whirl Stroke (OPWS), Major General Sunday Igbinomwanhia, on Saturday confirmed that two soldiers and an operative of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) were killed while repelling an attack on a rural community of Agatu Local Government Area in Benue State.

Daily Trust had earlier reported that two soldiers and two villagers were killed in the attack on Okokolo community of Agatu LGA on Thursday by armed invaders.

Igbinomwanhia in a statement made available to journalists in Makurdi, said, “On 18 January 2024, troops of Operation Whirl Stroke deployed at Akwu in Agatu LGA of Benue State were alarmed with the presence of people fleeing from Okokolo Community in the same LGA.

“On inquiry, the troops were informed that terrorists suspected to be armed herdsmen were advancing towards the town to attack it. The troops immediately mobilised and proceeded to the community which is about 15km from their base.

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“On arrival, the troops encountered the bandits carrying out an attack on the community and subsequently engaged the criminals in a gun duel that lasted three hours.

“The attack was successfully repelled with the terrorists withdrawing in disarray while evacuating their dead and wounded.

“The success achieved was however at a huge cost with three of the troops paying the supreme sacrifice to prevent the killing of the inhabitants of Okokolo and the intended sacking of the community.

“In addition to the death of the two soldiers and one Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps personnel, two other soldiers were wounded and immediately evacuated to the Nigerian Air Force hospital in Makurdi.”

He added that in a swift reaction to the gallantry exhibited by the troops of OPWS, the Executive Governor of Benue State, Hyacinth Alia represented by the Deputy Governor, Barr. Sam Ode and the Force Commander OPWS, visited the troops on Friday.

The force commander said that the team was received by the Chairman, Agatu LGA, Yakubu Ochepo and the traditional rulers of the communities in the LGA during which the governor commiserated with troops of Sector 5 OPWS and the entire OPWS

troops.

The governor further assured the Joint Task Force of the continual support of the state government and promised to assist in the treatment of the wounded.

The force commander also commended the troops and encouraged them to put the setback of the loss of their colleagues behind and remain focused on the mission of ridding the Joint Operations Area of the force of criminality.

Igbinomwanhia also assured the troops of the support of the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) in the conduct of their operations, adding that the troops were informed of the speedy recovery of the wounded soldiers taken to the hospital.

Meanwhile, the commander assured the governor of the commitment of the Force to continue to carry out the mandate and mission of the OPWS as aptly directed by the CDS for the security of life and property in the Force Joint Operations Area, stressing that further operations were already on to track the assailants to their hideout.