

5 Killed As Militiamen Invade Community

From Simeon Nwakaudu, Makurdi

FIVE persons are feared dead following militiamen's invasion of Iyortyom Village in Yooyo ward of Katsina Ala local council of Benue State at the weekend.

The village, located after River Hoyo, witnessed massive shooting, as the militiamen numbering about 60 stormed the community.

The armed men reportedly got information that the leader of a rival militia group, popularly called '*Ghana*' was taking refuge in his mother's home in the village.

Ghana is on the wanted list of the Benue State Police Command for leading one of the most vicious militia syndicates in the Tiv-speaking areas of the state.

It was learnt that before the group of militiamen got to Iyortyom Village,

Ghana and his group had got information on the invasion and fled the village.

The invading militiamen consequently burnt down the homes of *Ghana's* mother and other relatives within the compound.

They went further to shoot at unarmed persons found in the compound at the time of their invasion.

The Guardian learnt that the last week had been difficult for the residents of Iyortyom and neighbouring villages, as militiamen operating in the area had resorted to robbing market women on their way to or from the local markets to sell crops.

A community leader in Iyortyom Village, Mr. Richard Abu, told journalists that the people of the area were devastated by the magnitude of the destruction carried out

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by the militiamen.

He said: "These militiamen have grounded social and economic activities in the area in the last two weeks. The invasion at the weekend is the worst because they killed five persons."

Abu stated that politicians worsened the situation by maintaining the militiamen in anticipa-

tion of the forthcoming elections.

He called on the State Police Command to permanently post personnel along that axis to check the regular attacks by militiamen fighting for supremacy.

Contacted, the Benue State Police Commissioner, Ibrahim Mohammed, said that he was yet to receive the details of the attack from his operatives on ground

in Katsina-Ala.

He said that he would release the details to the media as soon as he received a comprehensive briefing from his men.

It would be recalled that last December, some lives were lost at Tor-Donga on the same axis when the *Ghana* group clashed with other militiamen after a political meeting between two top politicians in the area.

Criticism Trails Swearing In Of Sole Administrators

From Charles Ogugbuaaja, Owerri

The recent swearing in of 27 local council sole administrators by Governor Ikedi Ohakim of Imo State, has been criticised by an ex-lawmaker.

Speaking to *The Guardian* at the weekend, Mr. Oliver Enwerenem, who served eight years in the Imo State House of

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Assembly, faulted the appointment of sole administrators in the councils, describing it as "undemocratic and a rape of democracy."

He cited relevant sections of the constitution, which would make it impossible for governors to appoint council chairmen in such a manner.

Briefs

Ohakim Okays Appointment Of VC

IMO STATE Governor, Ikedi Ohakim, has approved the appointment of Professor Osita C. Nwebo as the Acting Vice Chancellor of Evan Enwerem University, Owerri (former Imo State University).

In two separate statements in Owerri, at the weekend, the Secretary to the State Government, Chief Cosmas Iwu, and the institution's Public Relations Officer, Henry Acholonu, disclosed that Nwebo's appointment "takes immediate effect."

Nwebo, a Professor of Public Law and former Dean, Faculty of Law and Director of the Institute of Continuing Education Programme (ICEP) of the university, is to take over from Prof. Anthony Okere, who had acted in that capacity for about one year.

—Charles Ogugbuaaja, Owerri

Why Suswam May Not Get Second Term, By Mrs Akume

DISTURBED by the political differences between Governor Gabriel Suswam of Benue State and his predecessor, Senator George Akume, wife of Senator Akume has declared that Suswam can only secure a second term if he reconciled with Akume, his political benefactor.

Speaking during a Special Congress organised by the Benue North West Senatorial District Peoples Democratic Chapter in Makurdi, Akume told Suswam pointedly that he should forget enjoying a second term if he continued to keep Akume out of the scheme of things politically.

Akume said that should the ugly trend continued, Senator Akume, who wielded tremendous influence in the politics