

Imo police burst gunmen's den, neutralise one

Group condemns gruesome murder of Benue tax official

From **Charles Ogugbuaaja**, Owerri

OPERATIVES of the Imo State Police Command have uncovered the camp of suspected hoodlums terrorising the state.

According to a statement issued by the police spokesperson at the weekend by the Police spokesperson in the state, Michael Abattam, the command received information where the bandit's camp in a forest located in Onicha, Ezinihitte Mbaise council of the state, where the suspected criminals allegedly operate and carry out acts of "terrorism, kidnapping, armed robbery and killing of innocent citizens."

He disclosed that on sighting the operatives, the hoodlums opened fire, during which the cross fire led to the death of one of the bandits, while oth-

ers escaped into the bush with bullet wounds, abandoning improvised explosives device (IED), arms ammunition and their vehicles.

The statement said: "Based on this information, the ever combat ready Imo Command's tactical teams, having carried diligent surveillance of the criminal hide-outs, on 18/1/2022 at about 1300 hours, stormed the deadly terror camp. The hoodlums on sighting the police operatives opened fire on them. The gallant and battle ready Police operatives swiftly returned the fire. In the fierce gun battle, one of the hoodlums was neutralised while others scampered into the adjoining bushes fatally injured with gunshot injuries.

"On combing the bush and searching the terror camp the

following exhibits were recovered; One AK47 rifle with Forty

(40) rounds of live ammunition; ten locally fabricated explosive devices; One Police hand grenade; two Toyota Highlander (SUV) Jeeps without registration number; One Lexus 350 SUV without registration number; One Lexus 330 SUV without registration number; two Biafran flags; different assorted charms; assorted dresses suspected to belong to kidnapped/robbed victims."

The police spokesperson in the state appealed to the public to report suspected criminals to the command, stressing: "Meanwhile, the command is using this medium to appeal to the good people of Imo State, not to allow criminals to use their community as safe haven to perpetrate heinous crimes. They should form vigilante groups/ neighborhood watch association to complement the efforts of the police and other security agencies. And that, they should report any suspicious persons seen with bullet wounds to the nearest police station or call the Command's emergency numbers 08034773600 or 08098880197.

"Finally, the Commissioner of Police Imo State, Rabiul Hussaini, while commending the officers and men for their dedication and gallantry, thanked Imolites for their unalloyed support and assured them of the Command's commitment in ensuring a crime free Imo

State," the statement concluded.

MEANWHILE, a non-governmental organisation, Coalition of Southern and Middle Belt Youth Leaders Assembly (COSMBYLA), has condemned the gruesome murder of a senior Inspector of Taxes at the Benue State Internal Revenue (BIRS), Sixtus Terfa Akure, by suspected military men.

In a statement at the weekend jointly signed by the President General / leader of the Coalition of South East Youth Leaders (COSEYL), of the COSMBYLA, Goodluck Ibem; the Coordinator, Forum of Middle Belt Youth Presidents, Terrence Kuanum; the Coordinator, South West Youth Leaders Forum (SWYLF), Shittu Waheed and the President, South South Youth Forum (SSYF), Tito Zokurnor, the group alleged that the ugly incidences in the state were calculated attempt to distract the administration of Sam Ortom.

The statement read: "The Coalition of Southern and Middle Belt Youth Leaders Assembly, COSMBYLA, the umbrella body of all the youth groups in the South East, South South, South West and Middle Belt region condemns in strongest terms the assassination of Mr. Sixtus Terfa Akure, a senior inspector of taxes working with the Benue State Internal Revenue Service (BIRS) by the Nigerian Army in Benue State. This is barbaric, wicked and we condemn it in its entirety.



Accident scene involving Peace Ryde Transport, coming from Owerri to Lagos near Okada, Benin-Lagos expressway... yesterday.

PHOTO: BERTRAM NWANNEKANMA