

# OPWS Kills Five Bandits In Benue

From **Joseph Wantu, Makurdi**

**A** COMBINED team of Operation Whirl Stroke (OPWS) and Community Volunteer Guards has neutralised five bandits in Utange, Katsina-Ala Local Council of Benue State.

The Special Adviser to Governor Samuel Ortom on Security, Lt-Col. Paul Hembah (rtd), told newsmen, yesterday, in his Makurdi office, that a member of the Community Volunteer Guards was also killed.

According to him, armed herdsmen and bandits, who encamp at the outskirts of Utange, took cover in the herders' tents upon pressure from security agencies, adding that the troops trailed them and razed the camp.

"The first encounter was in the morning 10:30hrs and the second happened at 16:00hrs. There is much improvement in security in Katsina-Ala. It used to be the nightmare; in fact, it was the worst.

"So, we will give a lot of kudos to Governor Samuel Ortom who, despite criticisms from different quarters, prioritised

security and the result is seen. Though there are still some pockets of crimes here and there. Some criminal elements are still stealing and kidnapping in the fringes, mainly on Benue and Taraba states borders," he said.

He noted that the ban on use of commercial motorcycles was still in force.

"We are still monitoring the security situation. The ban was a masterstroke on the activities of these bandits, as they have been crippled and cannot kidnap and run away again. Very soon, we will advise the government on the need to lift the ban.

"On the whole, the security situation in the state has improved. In the past months, we have not heard of any case of kidnapping. Before now, we were having kidnapping daily. People were kidnapped in the houses, waylaid and kidnapped at the gates of their houses; even people's wives were not spared but because of the doggedness of the governor to fight criminals," he added.