

Army commander, 14 others die in Benue attack

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Ahovi (Jos)

COMMANDER of the Nigerian Army peace-keeping force, codenamed Operation Whirl Stroke (OPWS), in Apa Local Council of Benue State and 14 other persons have been killed by suspected herdsmen in Opaha Community in Edikwu.

The Guardian gathered that the gunmen invaded the community about 7:20p.m. on Tuesday in an attack that dragged into yesterday morning.

A resident, Isah Daniel, said the community was deserted as a result of the attack, while the wounded were taken to a private clinic in Ugbokpo and Adoka.

"As I talk to you, we don't know the location of many people because everyone ran away, as the attackers invaded the community at night," he said.

Opaha is the hometown of House of Assembly member representing Apa Constituency, Abu Umoro, and the Commissioner for Finance, David Olofu.

The commissioner described the attack as 'unprovoked', saying that over 15 persons were killed, including an army officer.

"Yes, they just went to my community and killed over 15 people, including the commander of OPWS in that area.

This is a peaceful community. The attackers went to the community around 4.00p.m.

Gunmen kill six persons in Plateau

As I talk to you, the whole community has been sacked," the commissioner said.

Public Relations Officer (PRO) of OPWS, Flight-Lt. Flogh Oquoh, told newsmen that the commander was killed at the scene of the attack.

Also, the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Benue Command, SP Catherine Anene, confirmed the attack.

This is the third time communities in Apa would be attacked in recent weeks.

ALSO, gunmen killed by six persons in Farin Lamba community of Jos South Local Council of Plateau State

on Tuesday night.

The attackers were reportedly searching for illegal miners when they ran into the victims and started shooting. Six died instantly, while others sustained injuries.

The gunshots were said to have caused a lot of confusion and apprehension among the people.

A source told The Guardian, yesterday, government had been warning people to desist from illegal mining activities, adding that there was a time the place was locked down for some time with security operatives.

As government relaxed security at the place, illegal mining resumed.

But the residents of Riyom came out yesterday in their numbers and barricaded the road to protest against the killings, thereby, cutting access to the Abuja/Jos Road, motorists stranded.

This development continued for almost two hours until security personnel arrived and prevailed on the people to leave.

Meanwhile, Plateau governor-elect, Caleb Mutfwang, has decried the bloody attack by bandits on innocent citizens at the mining site.

In a statement, yesterday, by his Special Assistant on Media, Gyang Bere, the governor-elect condemned the attack, appealing to security agencies to fish out the perpetrators for prosecution.



President of Rotary Club of Naraguta, Mrs. Virginia Jang (left); Past District Governor of Rotary International, District 9125, Nigeria, Dr. Elvis Chukwu; Assistant District Governor, Tongnaan Dada-Bawa and other Rotarians during the inauguration of the club's awareness campaign for sickle cell disease in Jos South Local Council, Plateau State...yesterday. PHOTO: NAN