

Panic grips Benue community as gunmen kill army officer

• It was a robbery case, Governor Ortom says

From Joseph Wantu, Makurdi

PALPABLE fear has seized Tomataan community, around Low Cost area in Katsina-Ala Local Council of Benue State following the killing of an army officer on Sunday evening.

The Guardian learnt that the army officer, a colonel was on his way from Lagos to Takum in Taraba State when he was accosted and killed by some gunmen around Sati Agirigi on Katsina-Ala-Takum Road.

Soldiers have launched a reprisal attack, The Guardian learnt.

They allegedly set no fewer than 20 houses on fire in retaliation to the death of their colleague, causing residents to flee the communities. Access road to Takum from Katsina-Ala is now difficult as the soldiers were said to have blocked the road.

Governor Samuel Ortom, who confirmed the inci-

dence, said the soldier was killed by armed robbers. He said the Rapid Response Squad, comprising the army, police and the Nigerian Security and Civil

Defense Corps have been drafted to the area to apprehend the culprits as well as restore normalcy in the area. Ortom debunked the

claims that soldiers were burning houses in the area, insisting that if there was any burning of houses, it would be the handiwork of hoodlums, who cashed in on the situation to perpetrate their criminal acts.

The governor advised everyone along the Katsina-Ala axis to go about their businesses without fear because the situation is already under control.

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Ortom

2 Court sentences two to death by hanging for murder, others