

# Gunmen Kill 2 Soldiers, 15 Civilians, Kidnap 29 In Benue, Abuja

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Two soldiers and 15 villagers have reportedly been killed by suspected armed herdsmen in three communities of Opaha, Odugbo and Edikwu in Apa local government area of Benue State.

A local in the area told LEADERSHIP on telephone that 17 corpses, including two soldiers of Operation Whirl Stroke (OPWS), were picked in the surrounding bushes yesterday morning by security personnel combing the area.

The attack took place Tuesday evening, LEADERSHIP learnt.

Opaha, Edikwu Council Ward 2 of Apa local government area was one of the communities

attacked as well as the home of the commissioner for finance, David Olofu.

In his reaction, Olofu, who spoke on the phone, described the attack as 'unprovoked and barbaric', saying that over 15 people were killed in addition to security personnel.

"This is a peaceful community where the people who are predominantly farmers live peacefully, only for the attackers to go to the community around 4pm and open fire on them. As I am talking to you now, the whole community has been sacked."

When contacted on phone, the public relations officer, Operation Whirl Stroke, Flight Lt Flogh Oquoh told newsmen that the OPWS Commander had gone to the

scene of the attack, while the police public relations officer, Catherine Anene, said she was yet to get the report.

Our correspondent reports that the Tuesday attack brought to three the number of attacks on Apa communities in the last few weeks.

Last weekend, suspected armed herdsmen killed the Edikwu Council ward chairman of Labour Party (LP), Nathaniel Ochoche.

Also, in the Federal capital Territory (FCT), gunmen suspected to be kidnappers have reportedly attacked and abducted 29 persons in Kwali area council of the FCT, Abuja.

The gunmen had on Tuesday night stormed Yewuti village, the hometown of the immediate past vice chairman of Kwali Area

Council, Alhaji Zubairu Jibrin Yewuti, where they raided eight houses and made away with 29 people, including men, women and children.

Two of the victims, Mrs Zainab Umar and Mrs Aisha Zubairu, reportedly escaped from their abductors while being led into the bush.

Some of those kidnapped include Idris Mohammed, Abdullahi Zubairu, Sani S. Magani, Peter Modu, Ibrahim Mammam, Yelwa Abdulrasheed, Musa Suleiman, Simbiya Ishaku, Sumaiya Ibrahim, Muktari Yunusa and Mohammed Yelwa and Rahmat Shagari.

Others are Sumaiya Abubakar Yelwa, Mohammed Yelwa, Maimuna Muhammad, Hussaini Ya Nda Agyana, Hamza Ibrahim,

Lantana Yunusa, Nabila Agyana, Pufai Sakiru, Nafisa Aminu, Kasimu Adamu, Abako Adamu, Abdulayakin Aliyu, Lukman Aliyu, Rahina Audu, Abdulrazzak Usman, Sadiya Usman, Darius Samuel and Japheth Osu.

The Nigeria Police Force (NPF) did not confirm the incident when this report was filed yesterday.

LEADERSHIP reports that kidnappers have consistently targeted the FCT suburbs and even make incursions into parts of Kubwa and Pyakasa, which are close to the main city.

Bwari, Kuje, Gwagwalada, Kwali and Abaji area councils are often the worst-hit, with the Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC) also occasionally targeted by bandits.