

NEWS

IG orders DIG to find killers of Plateau monarch

THE Acting Inspector General of Police (IGP), Ibrahim Idris, has directed the Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) in charge of Operations, Joshack Habilla, to find killers of the paramount ruler of Bokkos, the Saf Ron Kulere, Lazarus Agaie.

A statement yesterday by the Force spokesperson, Don Awunah, promised that the culprits would be fished out for prosecution.

Urging aggrieved persons to be patient with the police in their investigation, Awunah said: "the death of the monarch, his family and orderly, are painful, but it is more painful when we take to reprisal attacks."

He urged the public to come up with information without overheating the tensed atmosphere, adding that the force will arrest the culprits.

The Special Federal Troops in Jos, the Plateau State capital, also known as "Operation Safe Haven (OPSH)", has imposed a 24-hour curfew on Bokkos.

The Media Officer of the military task force, Captain Ikedichi Iweha, who announced the curfew on phone, said: "We have imposed a 24-hour curfew on Bokkos. I'm in Bokkos but as

•STF imposes 24-hour curfew on Bokkos

From Faith Yahaya, Abuja and Yusufu Aminu Idegu, Jos

soon as I return to Jos, I will send a formal statement to that effect."

This followed the violence that erupted over the murder of the town's monarch, last Monday. The youths blocked the only entrance into the council headquarters but calm was restored when security agencies appealed for peace.

However, the youth went on the rampage the next day on hearing that gunmen attacked the monarch's home town, sacked residents and demolished buildings.

The aggrieved youth took their peaceful protest to the local government secretariat and the chairman appealed for calm. He urged them not to take laws into their hands.

But on Wednesday night, gunmen allegedly stormed Bokkos, set some buildings ablaze and killed a resident.

Palace sources said angry youths confronted the attackers and discovered that the Fulani community leader was conveying arms and ammunition to the gunmen in a military Hilux Van.

They reported their discovery to security agencies, and he was arrested. But the

youth insisted that the Fulani Ardo be released to them for instant judgment since, according to them, he had been masterminding the attacks, including allegedly killing the Saf Ron Kulere.

Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) in charge of Zone 4 arrived at Bokkos about 9 am to control the security situation.

His arrival, however, did not calm the tensed atmosphere. The youth continued to battle the troops against smuggling Ardo to Jos.

According to an eyewitness, the troops were forced to open fire on rampaging youths and seven were hit. Four died instantly; others sustained injuries.

But the soldiers denied killing anyone; they said the shot that killed the victims was not from them.

While the battle was raging in Bokkos, an emergency security meeting was on at the Government House, Jos, where security chiefs gathered to brainstorm on the way out.

The crisis spread to Jos, as concerned youths, about 200, dressed in black, protested the murder of the Saf Ron Kulere. They were escorted by policemen.



•IG Idris

They were, however, prevented from presenting their case to Governor Simon Lalong, as security agents claimed ignorance of the protest. When the protesters insisted, they were sprayed with teargas.

This affected students of the Nigerian Television College (NTC), whose campus is just 100 metres from the Government House, sparking another protest.

It was gathered that the police beat up the students and arrested four of them. A reporter with *Lightbearer* was beaten up as he attempted to photograph the crisis.

Meanwhile, tension has also been noticed in neighbouring Barkin Ladi and Bokkos councils, as the battle between the Fulani and youths continue. Both are said to be on the red alert in case of reprisal attacks.

