

# Gunmen kill 19 in Kogi community

**B**ANDITS killed 19 persons and injured several others at Agojeju-Odo community in Omala Local Government Area of Kogi on Thursday.

A community member alleged that a running battle between militia groups in parts of Benue and some bandits led to the onslaught on the sleepy towns of Agojeju-Odo, Ajokpachi-Odo, Bagaji and environs.

"They destroyed farm produce with ease in an attempt to draw the communities into the conflict," he said.

Retired Commodore Jerry Omodara, Special Adviser on Security to Gov. Usman Ododo confirmed the incident on Friday when he spoke with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Lokoja.

He said the governor had ordered a thorough investigation of the incident.

"The killing of 19 innocent and armless residents of the community by alleged hired militiamen is very callous, unacceptable and condem-

nable.

"The area is now calm, however, following the deployment of security operatives, who are keeping vigil there," he said.

Omodara said property; especially houses, vehicles, and crops were destroyed in the attack.

He called on people of Agojeju-Odo and neighbouring communities to remain calm as government and security agencies were on top of the situation.

Police spokesman in Kogi, SP Williams Ovyé-Aya, also confirmed the attack and assured that security operatives were keeping vigil over the community to forestall further attacks.

"A tactical response team of the police, the military, and members of vigilance groups has been deployed in the area. Normalcy has since returned to the troubled community.

"Investigation into the incident has started to bring the perpetrators to book," Ovyé-Aya assured.