

Gunmen defy curfew, kill policeman, burn houses, police station in Benue community

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DESPITE the curfew imposed on the three local government areas on the Sankera axis in Benue State, some gunmen, in early hours of Thursday attacked Tse Haaga community in Katsina-Ala Local Government area of the state killing a police officer.

The attackers, about 40, were reported to have stormed Haaga Village on

motorcycles around 4am on Thursday and burnt down several houses including a police station.

According to the natives, policemen were said to have engaged the gunmen in a duel leading to some of the bandits and two policemen injured. One of the injured policemen was said to have died later.

One of the natives who did not want to be named said, "it was around 4am this morning (Thursday), that

the criminals invaded Haaga community and were shooting sporadically."

"It was gathered that the policemen in the area engaged them in gun duel, but the situation was brought under control with the intervention of the troops of Operation Whirl Stroke (OPWS).

"One of the bandits was found in the bush with some rounds of ammunition and killed by the troops of OPWS in collaboration with the police.

The chairman of Katsina-Ala Local Government Area, Alfred Atera, who confirmed the attack, said that one policeman was killed, while a police station and some houses were also burnt by the attackers.

The state Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Catherine Anene, who confirmed the attack, said that policemen engaged the bandits in gun duel, but two policemen were injured and one of them later died.

"During the exchange of fire, many of the hoodlums sustained gunshot injuries and fled into the forest, while two policemen also sustained gunshot injuries and were rushed to the General Hospital, Katsina-Ala, where one of them was confirmed dead, while the other is receiving medical treatment."

When contacted, the Commander of OPWS, Major-General Adeyemi Yekini, told newsmen on phone that

he could not comment on the ongoing operation.

"We are in operation around that axis, but I can't comment further on the ongoing operation. You may wish to contact the Directorate of Defence Information, Defence Headquarters, Abuja, thanks", Yekini said.

It will be recalled that the state government had few days ago, imposed curfew on the three local government areas on the Sankera axis.

Two policemen die in