

# Troops kill five bandits in Benue

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FIVE bandits were neutralised by troops of *Operation Whirl Stroke* in the Untange Ward of Katsina Ala Local Government Area of Benue State between Tuesday and Thursday.

Lieutenant Colonel Paul Hemba (retd), the Security Adviser to Governor Samuel Ortom, disclosed this to newsmen on Friday in his office in Makurdi.

He said bandits, however, killed a community volunteer guard who was on patrol within the period.

Hemba said many herdsmen's camps were also destroyed during an operation within the Katsina Ala axis.

The security adviser said the first incident occurred on Tuesday when some bandits invaded Untange ward in Katsina Ala Local Government Area and a combined team of OPWS and community volunteer guards on patrol repelled them.

He said the next day, one of the community volunteer

guards who were on patrol, was cornered and killed by bandits in a reprisal attack and troops began to counter them and were able to neutralise three of them.

He added that two of the bandits were killed on Thursday around 4.00 p.m. by troops of *Operation Whirl Stroke*.

"In all, five bandits were killed by the troops while bandits killed one volunteer guard who was on patrol of the area," he said.

Hemba regretted that the local bandits now "form an alliance" with herdsmen within the area to unleash terror on villagers.

He, however, said that with the efforts of the state government and security agencies, crime had reduced in the Katsina Ala axis.

As a result of the development, Hemba said the state government might soon relax the embargo placed on the use of motorcycles and *Toyota Corolla*, popularly known as *duck yanch*, in the axis.