

# Five die as soldiers, villagers clash in Niger

August 5, 2016

*Nigerian soldiers*

## ***Enyioha Opara, Minna***

No fewer than five persons were feared killed and two others injured when some soldiers clashed with some villagers at Kpaidna village in the Bosso Local Government Area of Niger State in the early hours of Thursday.

Also four vehicles belonging to the Nigerian Army were burnt and destroyed in the milieu.

The two injured people were said to be soldiers while the identities of the deceased were yet to be known as of press time.

Our correspondent gathered that a combined team of soldiers and personnel of the Nigerian Air Force were in the village on an official operation when the clash occurred.

The military team was reported to have been in the village in search of arms and ammunition which intelligence reports indicated were hidden in some houses in the village.

Our correspondent learnt that the villagers mistook the soldiers for armed Fulani herdsmen and therefore attacked them leading to the death of the five people and injury of the two others.

The Niger State Police Command Public Relations Officer, Bala Elkana, when contacted, confirmed the incident saying, "It was purely a military operation. We were not involved in it."

Elkana said one of the two soldiers injured was placed on admission at the Police Clinic while the other was receiving treatment at the Minna General Hospital. He, however, said no civilian casualty was recorded.

The police spokesman declined to confirm the identities of those killed preferring to direct our correspondent to the army.

When contacted, the Assistant Director Army Public Relations, Major Njideka Agwu, also confirmed the incident.

"We heard that there were arms and ammunition in that village and we went for cordon and search. Unfortunately the villagers opened fire on us. We don't know the number of casualty as of now because the information is sketchy."

Agwu added, "Both troops and field commanders are still at the location and investigation is in progress."

Our correspondent learnt that some of the villagers had fled from Kpaidna for fear that soldiers could return for reprisal.

Many of the villagers with luggage on their heads were seen at Gidan Kwanu, some 60 kilometres from the place the incident happened, in search of a safe haven.

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