

## NEWS

# Two die as soldiers, youths clash in Plateau

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## Friday Olokor, Jos

Two persons were said to have been shot during a clash between soldiers and some youths in Sopp Village, in the Riyom Local Government Area of Plateau State.

Although details were still sketchy as of press time, our correspondent learnt that the youths were protesting against alleged poisoning of a 32-year-old well during an air raid by members of the military

Special Task Force, code-named *Operation Safe Haven*, which led to the death of two persons.

The death of the men in the well sparked off protest by the youths and in the process, two persons were shot.

While the corpses of those who died in the well had been deposited in a mortuary, those injured during the protest were said to be receiving treatment in a hospital.

The spokesperson for the OPSH, Captain Umar Adams, confirmed the death of the two persons, but denied that the well was poisoned.

He said, “There is an old well in the community that was constructed in 1985 but was abandoned for many years. Apart from the fact that we carry out security activities to ensure that we avert crisis and promote unity, we sometimes carry out social responsibilities.

“Our troops in Riyom said, ‘This well has been left to waste. Why don’t we revive it so that at least everybody can benefit?’ That was why our troops decided to look for well drillers. Two young men volunteered and said they could do it because that was their job.

“I cannot tell how those boys got inside the well with their working tools. The debris that had accumulated inside the well, I guess, led to their death. They may have choked to death.

“The youths mobilised in hundreds and started a violent protest against our troops, alleging that our soldiers killed their people, to the extent that they started damaging the accommodation of our troops. Even the equipment in their rooms, including television sets and generators, were scattered and damaged.”

Adams said the two persons were shot for attempting to snatch rifles from soldiers during the protest.

