

Nine killed in Rivers as army, police confirm soldier's death

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Acting Inspector-General of Police, Mohammed Adamu

Chukwudi Akasike, Eric Dumo and Sampson Itode

Nine persons were feared killed in Abonnema, Akoku-Toru Local Government Area of Rivers State during Saturday's presidential and National Assembly elections.

This is just as the state police command confirmed the killing of a soldier during a shootout in the area.

Though the State Police Public Relations Officer could not give details of how the soldier was killed, it was gathered that gunmen suspected to be political thugs shot and killed the soldier.

It was also gathered that two civilians sustained serious gunshot injuries in Abonnema.

However, a source in Abonnema explained that soldiers killed over six persons, adding that hundreds of indigenes of the area ran helter-skelter during the shootout, which lasted for several minutes.

The source pointed out that six persons known to him were among the dead in Abonnema at the end of the shooting.

In Asarama, Andoni Local Government Area of the state, a chieftain of the All Progressives Congress and former council chairman, Mowan Etete, and his elder brother were killed on Saturday morning by unknown gunmen suspected to be political thugs.

Etete was a former aide to Governor Nyesom Wike on Political Matters before he defected to the APC.

Confirming Etete's death, the state Police Public Relations Officer, Mr Nnamdi Omoni, said a group of gunmen had scaled the fence of the deceased's building, gained entrance into the house and killed him and his elder brother.

He said, "The man (Etete) was in his house when unknown gunmen scaled the fence, entered inside the house and killed him and his brother.

"We had issues in Okrika and in Andoni. In Andoni, two lives were lost as a former local government chairman and his brother were shot dead. In other places, we had pockets of crisis. Our men on the ground have been able to restore normalcy in these areas.

"The Commissioner of Police has ordered investigation into these matters. We already have a task force on electoral offences. The task force is headed by the Deputy Commissioner of Police and arrests have been made in all the cases and the persons arrested are helping us."

The Nigerian Army on Saturday night confirmed the killing of a soldier and six civilians during a shootout between its men and political thugs.

A statement signed by the Acting Director, Army Public Relations, Col Sagir Musa, indicated that six of the assailants, described as armed political thugs, were killed.

"Information reaching Headquarters Nigerian Army revealed that troops of 6 Division on a legitimate duty of protecting lives and properties of law abiding citizens in Abonnema, Akuku Toru LGA, Rivers State, were attacked by some hoodlums.

“The pre-planned attack occurred between Charles and Bob-Manuel’s compounds in Abonnema town at about 1pm on February 23, 2019. The attackers barricaded a major road into the town and laid an ambush in the adjoining built-up areas from where they opened fire on our unsuspecting troops when they attempted to remove the barricade.

“The gallant troops fought their way through the siege and in the process killed six of the assailants. However, we lost a lieutenant in the encounter,” the statement read in part.

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