

PLUS

Three feared dead, residents kick as troops raid Rivers community

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Rivers State Commissioner of Police, Mr Joseph Mukan

Dennis Naku, Port Harcourt

Three persons were feared killed, while two other sustained injuries during a joint security operation in some communities in the Andoni Local Government Area of Rivers State on Sunday.

Our correspondent gathered that the joint security raid involved police and military personnel, accompanied by operatives of a local outfit, the Andoni Security Peace and

Advisory Council, who stormed the communities in gunboats, while the residents were preparing for church service.

Eyewitnesses said the security personnel came searching for some youths allegedly involved in criminal activities, adding that they heard loud gunshots from different directions.

The eyewitnesses stated that though the targets of the security personnel fled, they alleged that three persons from Ajakajak lost their lives during the raid before the team proceeded to other communities in Andoni, just as residents fled in different directions.

The other Andoni communities raided, according to sources, are Ibot-Irem, Samanga, Dema, Oturia and Otuafulu.

The President-General, Obolo Youths Coalition, Ijaonama Amon, told our correspondent on the telephone that the three persons, who died, were from the Ajakajak community, while two others sustained life-threatening injuries in Ibot-Irem.

Amon condemned the invasion of the communities and advised security agencies to go after their targets rather than inflicting harm and killing innocent persons, who had nothing to do with crime, saying the constant raid of Andoni was traumatic for the people.

He stated, “Obolo is an ethnic group that cuts across Rivers and Akwa Ibom states as well as some parts of Abia State. The military should understand that Ajakajak is a community and not a family if they are looking for a particular person.

“More than 2,000 people live in that community. If you are coming to raid a community, it should be for specific targets and not a zigzag raid. The three persons, who died, are from Ajakajak, my community.

“The security operatives need to work with the communities to differentiate innocent residents from those involved in criminal activities instead of raiding the entire area.

“This raid is condemnable and I call on the Inspector-General of Police and the Chief of Army Staff to intervene and investigate this incident. They should tell their men not to make Andoni a warfront and for them to stop brutalising our people.”

When contacted, the spokesman for the 6 Division, Nigerian Army, Major Charles Ekeocha, said the raid was not carried by soldiers from the division.

On his part, the state Police Public Relations Officer, Nnamdi Omoni, confirmed the raid, saying it was a sting operation.

“I can confirm. It was a sting operation aimed at dislodging and dislocating the criminals,” Omoni said in reply to a message sent to him by our correspondent. ,,

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