

Gunmen defy Benue curfew, kill policeman, raze houses

John Charles, Makurdi

GUNMEN suspected to be gang members of the late notorious warlord, Terwase Akwaza, alias Gana, in the early hours of Thursday defied an existing curfew and attacked Tse Haaga community in the Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State.

The bandits killed a policeman and burnt down several houses, including a police station.

According to locals, the attackers numbering about 40 had stormed the sleeping community around 4am.

Recall that following the killing of Terkura Suswam, the elder brother of the former state governor, Gabriel Suswam, the state government had imposed a dusk-to-dawn curfew (6pm to 6am) on the three local government areas of Katsina-Ala, Ukum and Logo.

Government had also banned the use of motorcycles and Toyota Corolla (old model) vehicles popularly known in Benue as

'duck nyanch' in the axis.

But some indigenes told our correspondent that the gunmen, who stormed Tse Haaga in the early hours of Thursday, rode into the community on motorcycles.

"They came in their numbers on motorcycles and attacked the vigilantes and policemen, set the police station and several houses ablaze.

"But policemen tried to repel the criminals by engaging them (gunmen) in gun duel. It was when troops of Operation Whirl Stroke came that normalcy was returned," one of the locals who did not want to be mentioned said.

Confirming the attack, the Chairman of Katsina Ala LGA, Alfred Atera, said a police officer was killed.

The Benue State Police Command, which also confirmed the attack, said two policemen were injured in gun duel in which one died.

According to the statement by the command spokesperson, Catherine Anene, many of the gunmen were also injured during

the attack.

Anene said, "Cordon and search operation are ongoing at Haaga and one suspect has been arrested."

When contacted, the OPWS Commander, Maj. Gen. Adeyemi Yekini, who confirmed that his troops were in operation in Katsina Ala area, declined further comments.

Family laments a

Gbenga Odogun, Lokoja

TWENTY-four hours after three sisters of the same family were abducted in Kogi community, gunmen again struck and kidnapped five members of the same family.

The incident was said to have happened in Adabode-Sabo community in the Kogi-Kotonkarfe Local Government Area of Kogi State.

The Chairman of Kogi-Kotonkarfe Local Government Area, Alhaji Isah Abdulkarim, who confirmed the latest incident, said that relevant security agencies have