

Slain soldiers: Troops invade Benue community, 12 allegedly killed

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Some Soldiers. Photo: leakers.mg

At least, 12 persons were on Wednesday killed by troops of Operation Whirl Stroke, who invaded Bonta community in Konshisha Local Government Area of Benue State in search of missing soldiers.

It was gathered that some houses were allegedly destroyed by the invading soldiers.

Locals from the area informed our correspondent that some militias had on Monday abducted two soldiers who were on patrol of Bando community in Konshisha council area.

The soldiers were later learnt to have been killed by the local militias, which prompted the deployment of 15 trucks loaded with soldiers to the area on Tuesday.

One of the indigenes, who fled the community, told The PUNCH in a telephone interview that “there has been renewed land dispute between Bonda community in Konshisha and Ukpute AINU in Oju council area.

“Troops were deployed to the troubled communities to maintain peace before bandits under the code name of ‘Bonta Boys’ ambushed some soldiers and later killed them. On Tuesday, about 15 truck-loads of soldiers were sighted in Bonda community with helicopters on air surveillance.

“The moment I sighted the deployment of soldiers and learnt that the missing soldiers had been killed by the militias, I quickly picked my family and left the village because the Zaki Biam massacre in 2001 is still fresh in my memory.

“As am talking to you now (Wednesday) morning, Bonda village and other adjoining villages have completely been destroyed by the troops and several people that were found in the area were killed.”

As of the time of filing this report, residents of Bonta village and environs have all deserted their villages and currently taking refuge at Tse-Agbaragba, headquarters of Konshisha LGA

Recall that military source had informed our correspondent on Tuesday that soldiers were deployed to Bonta to trail bandits who attacked soldiers in the area.

A military source, who confided in our correspondent, said, “But I told you on Tuesday that troops have been deployed to Bonta; the soldiers are carrying out land and air surveillance of the area and I can confirm to you that about 12 bandits have been neutralised and the surveillance is still ongoing until we rid the place of bandits.”

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When asked the whereabouts of the missing soldiers, the source added, “I cannot tell you anything about that now.”

When contacted, the Police Public Relations Officer, Catherine Anene, said she was not aware of any of such raid by the military in Konshisha LGA.

Efforts to speak with Force Commander of Operation Whirl Stroke, Maj. Gen. Adeyemi Yekini, failed as all his lines were switched off when our correspondent tried calling him.