

Kidnappers behead councillor-elect, cousin in Benue

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By John Charles

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Tension has enveloped Owupa and Orokam communities in Ogbadibo Local Government Area of Benue State following the killing of a councillor-elect and his cousin by suspected kidnappers.

Consequently, youths from the two communities on Friday barricaded the highway and protested the killing as well as incessant kidnapping in both communities.

Sources said that the councillor-elect identified as Paul Ojile, and his cousin had joined hunters and members of vigilante groups within the communities who had gone in search of the kidnap victims on Thursday.

Ojile was on April, 30th 2022 elected a councillor for Orokam 3 and awaiting inauguration before he was killed alongside his cousin on Thursday.

“The problem started on Wednesday when some Fulani herdsmen abducted two residents of Orokam, the councillor-elect and his cousin joined other groups of hunters and vigilantes as well as security men in search of the kidnap victim only to discover that the councillor-elect and his cousin had been beheaded,” a resident of the community identified only as Sunny, said.

When contacted, the Chairman of the local government, Samuel Onu, confirmed the report and said that the councillor-elect and his cousin were beheaded.

He lamented that both Owupa and Orokam communities had been under the grip of abduction being orchestrated by suspected Fulanis in recent times.

Onu said, “There was a kidnap yesterday; actually in the last three days, the herdsmen were troubling the area, there had been incessant kidnapping in the local government.

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“They left one community in Owukpa and they went to Orokam; on their way, they kidnapped one man. The Councillor-elect who lives in the village is a hunter. He, his cousin, other hunters and the vigilante with operation zenda had entered the forest to see if they could rescue the man that was kidnapped.

“It was when they were to return yesterday (Thursday) that they noticed two of them were missing but they were able to arrest two herders.

“It was this (Friday) morning that they were able to check again and found their lifeless body beheaded – the Councillor-elect and his cousin.

“The arrested herdsmen had been taken to Makurdi by Operation Zenda”, adding that the traditional heads of Owukpa and Orokam has been begging the youth who blocked roads in the area.

“We have all been talking to them. It’s a little bit calm now,” the chairman said.

When contacted, the State Command Public Relations Officer, Catherine Anene, said she was yet to get the report.

“It is when they bring it to my notice that I get to know but for now, am yet to get the report,” Anene said.