

Benue gov orders arrest of newlywed killers

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| By John Charles

The Benue State Governor, Hyacinth Alia, has issued a 48-hour ultimatum to security agencies to identify and arrest the suspected killers of two young men, including a newlywed, who were murdered in Gwer East Local Government Area on Monday.

The governor's directive was contained in a statement released by his Chief Press Secretary, Kula Tersoo, in which he condemned the brutal killings and other recent acts of violence in the state.

PUNCH Metro gathered on Tuesday that the victims, identified as Jonathan Ogah and Gabriel Ogodo, were travelling from Oju Local Government Area to Makurdi on a motorcycle when they were ambushed and killed at

Ullam in Gwer East.

The incident, our correspondent gathered, has since heightened tensions between the Igede and Tiv communities.

“The report said that the two were travelling from Oju on their motorcycle when they were attacked and killed in cold blood,” the governor noted in the statement.

Alia also decried a separate attack on the Nyifon community in Mbaikyongo Ward of Buruku Local Government Area, which was reportedly carried out by youths from the Mbayaka community in Kusuv, also in Buruku LGA. The attack was reportedly triggered by a disagreement stemming from a boat crash.

Describing both incidents as “uncalled for and unfortunate,” Alia said, “Nobody or group has the right to invade another community or inflict harm under any circumstance.”

He ordered security agencies to coordinate with traditional rulers in the affected areas and “comb the vicinity thoroughly” to apprehend those responsible within 48 hours.

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“Benue is beginning to experience a level of security stability, and I will not tolerate any attempt by anyone, regardless of their status or intentions, to instigate unrest or threaten the peace we are working hard to sustain,” he added.

The governor also urged residents to remain calm and law-abiding as investigations continued, assuring them that his administration remained committed to protecting lives and property.

A community source, on Tuesday, who spoke to PUNCH Metro on condition of anonymity, said the killings were linked to the lingering communal crisis between Konshisha and Gwer East LGAs.

Corroborating the claim, the Secretary of Oju Local Government Area, Benson Egbodo, said, “Our men were victims of the Konshisha and Gwer East communal clash, which has lingered for three months now. At about 11am on Monday, we received a report of the killing of two of our men at Ullam in Gwer East LGA.”

According to Egbodo, the victims had left Oju at around 7am on a motorcycle, heading for Makurdi, when they were attacked.

“What we were told was that the youths thought the two young men were from Konshisha, and they attacked and killed them,” he explained.

Egbodo added that the remains of the victims had been deposited in the morgue, saying, “Unfortunately, one of the deceased, Jonathan Ogah, got married on Saturday and was killed on Monday.”

Efforts to reach the spokesperson of the Benue State Police Command, Udeme Edet, for confirmation were unsuccessful, as calls to her phone went unanswered.