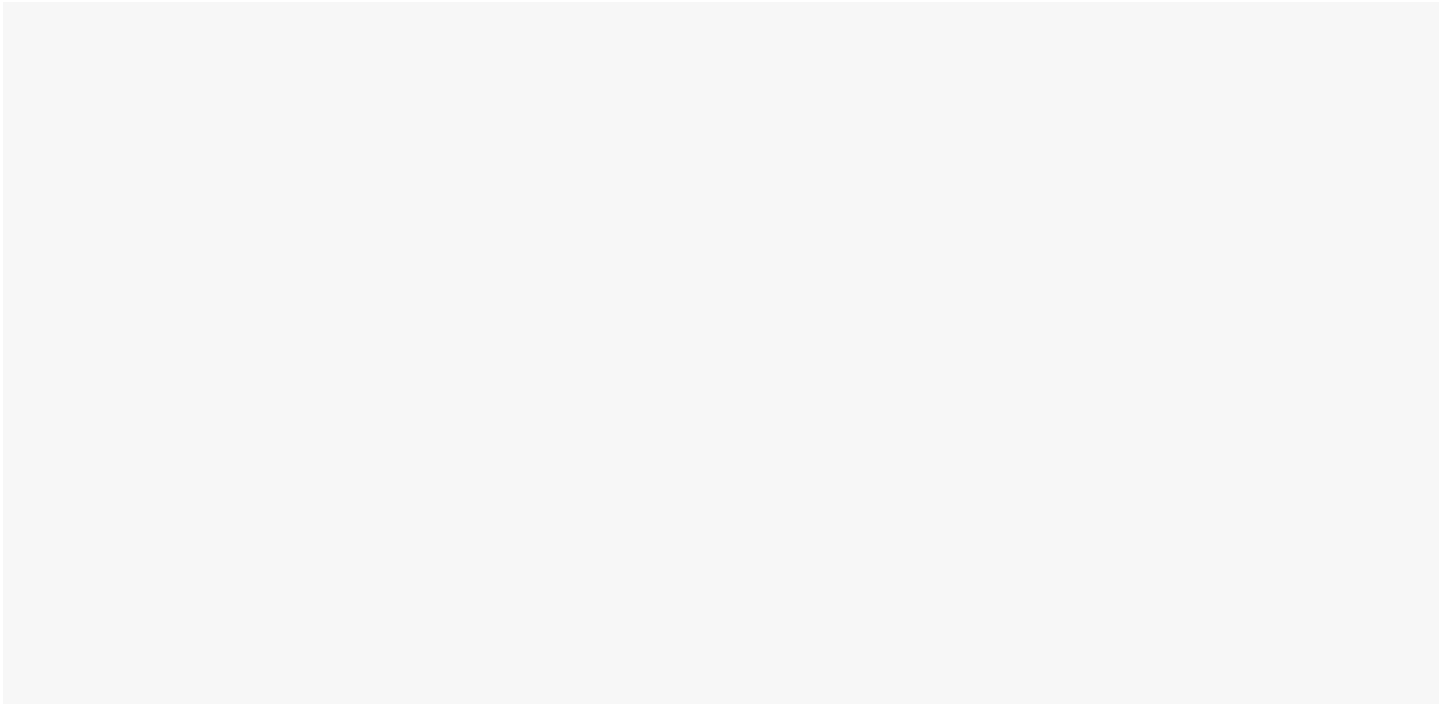


Troops kill 3 bandits in gun battle, recover weapons in Benue

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From **Rose Ejembi**, Makurdi

At least three suspected armed bandits were Sunday night reportedly gunned down at Adaka community in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State following gun battle with troops of the joint military spike operation codenamed, Operation Whirl Stroke (OPWS).

It was learnt that the armed bandits stormed the area, in the suburb of Makurdi, the state capital, to maim and rob unsuspecting members of the community of their belongings before they were sighted and a distress call was put across to the military personnel, who were on vehicle patrol around the area.

Our correspondent further gathered that the criminal elements met a strong resistance from the military after they first opened fire on the troops.

A witness from the community, who identified himself as Isaac Apine, told newsmen in Makurdi that at about 8pm on Sunday, suspected armed bandits were seen loitering

around the area to attack the entire community before a man and his wife ran into them and were shot in the process.

Apine said: “It was when we heard terrible gunshots that we quickly alerted the military personnel, who responded swiftly and came to repel the armed bandits.

“In fact, if not for the prompt intervention of the military, something terrible more than this could have happened. The military engaged the bandits in a heavy gun dwell and at the end we saw them with three dead bodies.

“The bandits were armed with sophisticated weapons. We sincerely thank the military personnel for their action and we are appealing for more deployment of security to our area to avert further attacks”, Apine said.

When contacted, Commander of OPWS, Major General Adeyemi Yekini, said his patrol team had an encounter with some armed bandits around Adaka community.

“Our troops are on top of the situation and will do everything possible with other security agencies on ground to protect the people,” Yekini stated.

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