

Alleged missing soldier: Troops invade Abia community, kill 10, raze 50 houses

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From Okey Sampson, Umuahia

Soldiers of 14 Brigade, Nigerian Army, Ohafia, Abia State were reported to have, on Thursday last week, invaded Amangwu community, in Ohafia Local Government Area over alleged missing of a soldier on leave.

Over 10 people were alleged to have been killed and 50 houses reported to have been razed by the ravaging soldiers.

It was gathered that a soldier, who was on leave, had visited his village, Ikwun, in Cross Rivers State, and on his way back, allegedly got missing at the border between Amuma Ohafia and Amangwu (about three kilometres from Amangwu). In the process of searching for the said missing soldier, troops from the brigade were reported to have invaded Amangwu community.

The soldiers were said to have shot sporadically, forcing natives to run helter-skelter for their dear lives. The invading soldiers were reported to have arrested many of the natives, some of whom were yet to be seen. Some of the natives who fled from the onslaught of the invading soldiers into the adjoining bushes and villages, were yet to return home as the troops of occupation are said to still be laying siege in the devastated community.

People are said not to be allowed to enter or leave Amangwu as the soldiers continue their onslaught, allegedly breaking into houses and looting property of some people. A native of the area who gave his name as Umah, and who said he spoke from his hideout inside the bush, alleged that his younger brother was among those killed on a bike on Sunday by soldiers who laid ambush against them.

He equally disclosed that a lady came home from Aba last week to bury her husband, and in the wake of the military invasion, she died and her body was yet to be taken to the mortuary as nobody could go in to bring it out from their house.

“The woman came back last week to bury her husband and on the first day of the invasion, she collapsed and died and the body is yet to be taken to the mortuary because nobody is allowed in or out of Amangwu.”

A poultry farmer in the area, Kalu said he and his attendants left their poultry farm with over 1,000 birds and fled the community and lamented he did not know the fate of the birds.

Kalu said: "As I talk to you, my village, Amangwu Ohafia, has been invaded by the army garrison in Ohafia. Since Thursday (last week) when the invasion commenced, over 10 people have been killed. Two youths were shot dead yesterday (Sunday), the villagers have all fled into the bush.

"In March this year, Amangwu was invaded by the same army in Ohafia and about 40 houses were burnt by the army, those houses are still there not yet rebuilt. They claimed their reason for that mayhem was that they're looking for the IPOB, but I don't know the reason they will give for this one."

The sons and daughters of Amangwu Ohafia, both at home and abroad are calling on the army authorities to end the military siege of their community without further delay, as they said the alleged missing soldier was not in any way within Amangwu.

When contacted, the Army Public Relations Officer (APRO), Lt. Innocent Omale, simply said he was "not in the picture".