

2 Troops raid IPOB, ESN camps in Ebonyi, Enugu

• Recover explosives, weapons

From **Molly Kilete**, Abuja

THE Army Headquarters in Abuja said its soldiers on internal security operations in the South East have uncovered and raided a camp belonging to members of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and the Eastern Security Network (ESN).

The camp located at Amagu village, Nkalaha community in Ishielu Local Government Area (LGA) of Ebonyi State were uncovered by soldiers of 82 Division, in conjunction with the Nigerian Air Force, Nigeria Police and Department of State Services, during a joint operation codenamed Exercise Golden Dawn, in the area. Director, Army Public Relations, Brigadier General Onyema Nwachukwu, who made the disclosure in a statement, said the soldiers killed some IPOB members, recovered some Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), weapons and other logistics, while others took to their heels.

Nwachukwu's statement reads: "Troops of 82 Division, in conjunction with the Nigerian Air Force, Nigeria Police and Department of State Services on Exercise GOLDEN DAWN II, on Monday, December 19, 2022 conducted joint raid operations at an IPOB/ESN Camp, located at Amagu village, Nkalaha community, Ishielu LGA of Ebonyi State.

"During the raid operations,

the troops came in contact with members of the dissident group, resulting in exchange of fire. In the encounter, the gallant troops neutralised some of the irredentists, while others took to their heels, abandoning the camp.

"On winning the fire fight, troops recovered 102 rounds of 7.62mm special, two pump action guns, five locally made rifles, one roll of detonator 27, quantity 24 detonators, 33 electrical cables, quantity 12 of type 36 hand grenades and 12 bags of substances suspected

to be marijuana. Other items recovered include, three motorcycles, two generators, one water pumping machine, military woodland camouflage and Nigeria Police uniform.

3 "In a separate operation on the same date, troops on routine patrol in Agubeji community in Enugu State have arrested a suspect, one Mr Martins Abogwu, for conniving with IPOB/ESN elements to unleash attacks on innocent citizens. The suspect, who claimed to be the Chief Security Officer of the community, is assisting in the preliminary investigations that followed and has led troops

to their camp, where a shallow grave containing two decomposing bodies were uncovered. One of the bodies has been identified as a member of the local vigilance group, who was kidnapped about a month ago.

"The Nigerian Army reassures law abiding citizens of its unwavering resolve, in synergy with other services and security agencies, to deny criminal elements the freedom of action and progressively rid the nation of identified threats to national security by executing its constitutional responsibilities, in conformity with extant rules of engagement.

(Continued on www.sunnewsonline.com)

FGM: Reps propose 4 years jail term, N200,000 fine for offenders

HOUSE of Representatives has passed for first reading a bill seeking four years jail term or a fine of N200,000 for anyone convicted for engaging in Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

The bill sponsored by Ganiyu Johnson is seeking to amend the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act, 2015 to increase the penalty for FGM.

Johnson, in his lead debate, noted the proposed legislation seeks to amend Section 6(2) of the principal Act to provide that "any person who performs female circumcision or genital mutilation or engages another to carry out such circumcision or mutilation commits an offence, and is liable, on conviction, to a term of imprisonment not exceeding five years or to a fine not exceeding one million

naira or to both".

He said if the amendment scales through, it would help to serve as a deterrent to persons engaging in the practice.

The lawmaker said: "A UNICEF survey recently revealed that in Nigeria, one out of four girls and one out of 10 boys suffer from sexual molestation, and about one out of 10 children will be sexually abused before their 18th birthday. Among factors that encourage the commission of such unwholesome practices like female genital mutilation is lack of adequate sanctions.

"Female genital mutilation, also known as female circumcision, excision or genital cutting, comprises all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injuries to

the genital organs for non-medical reasons, mostly carried out between infancy and age 15.

"The procedure has no health benefits for girls and women. Because it is usually performed without permission and often against will, it violates girls' right to make important decisions about their sexual and reproductive health. Reports show that 200 million girls and women alive today have undergone a form of genital mutilation (FGM).

"An additional 2 million girls could undergo female genital mutilation by 2030 as a result of COVID-19. It is for this reason that this Bill is proposed, to review the sanctions provided within the VAPP Act, so as to give it the required deterrence it deserves."