

Black weekend in Benue as herdsmen kill 3 Ortom's kinsmen, abduct 8

OPWS troops rescue victims

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It was a black weekend for Governor Samuel Ortom of Benue State as suspected Fulani terrorists ambushed and killed three of his kinsmen who were returning from a burial.

The armed insurgents also kidnapped eight other persons who have now been rescued by troops from the Operation Whirl Stroke (OPWS) after an exchange of gun fire with the invaders.

The militia herders' killing came barely three days after the militants made an incursion into the Tse-Ude-ghe in Mbapa council ward of Gwer West Local Government Area of the state where they killed five people.

Governor Samuel Ortom had raised the alarm over massive influx of herdsmen in parts of the state especially in Guma, his home local government as well as Gwer

West and Makurdi among others.

New Telegraph learnt that the three kinsmen of the governor murdered include two males and a female and were killed along Iordye-Gbajimba road in Guma Local Government Area; while those kidnapped were: Philip Akpage, 56, Aondokula Ijah, 30; Mrs. Kwadoo Takada, 60; Mrs. Kwakuma Asongu, 55; Mrs. Agnes Ornguize, 54; Mrs. Yanguchan Tiv, 45; Mrs. Kwadoo Mtomga, 45 and Mrs. Mne-mbe Terlumum, 30.

The governor's Chief Press Secretary, Mr. Nathaniel Ikyur, who confirmed the incidences in separate statements, said that the murdered victims were riding on a motorcycle when they were ambushed and shot dead by the killer herdsmen.

Mr. Ikyur said two of the victims died on the spot from gunshot wounds while the other who was brutally hacked with machete died hours later.

He said, "soldiers attached to Operation Whirl-Stroke (OPWS) recovered the bodies and deposited the corpses at Gbajimba general hospital."

Mr. Ikyur also said that the rescued kidnapped victims who also hail from Agasha town in Guma Local Government Area were abducted on their farms by herdsmen last Wednesday. He said the rescued victims spent over three days with their abductors before their rescue.

According to Mr. Ikyur, the Special Adviser to Governor Ortom on Security, Lt. Col Paul Hemba (rtd) had already briefed the governor on the successful rescue operation.

He quoted Lt. Col. Hemba as explaining that the troops had made contact with the kidnapers at Gbekyor leading to an exchange of gunfire with the perpetrators who were later overpowered by the superior firepower of the soldiers leading to the successful rescue of the victims who were dumped by their captors.

He said the victims have been reunited with their families.