

Military Clashes with Gana's Militia, Kill Two, Arrest Five

Kingsley Nwezeh in Abuja

Troops of Operation Whirl Stroke deployed in the North Central part of the country yesterday clashed with members of a militia group in Benue State, killing two while five others were arrested.

The group is linked to a militia leader, Ierwase Akwaza, who was killed by soldiers last week on his way to Markurdi after embracing the amnesty programme of the Benue State Government.

The state government had expressed shock at the manner of his killing after he surrendered with some of his fighters, but the military authorities said he was killed in a shootout with the troops.

His death sparked fears of reprisal from members of his group in Benue and Taraba States axis where they allegedly operated.

A military update issued by the Directorate of Defence Media Operations (DDMO) said following actionable intelligence on

the possible hideout of remnants of late Gana's militia elements around Adu general area in Chanchanji council ward of Takum Local Government Area of Taraba State, troops of Sector 2 deployed in Gbise in Katsina Ala Local Government Area of Benue State in conjunction with troops of Sector 4 conducted a joint dawn raid operation on the identified hideout at Adu.

"In the course of the operation, troops had contact with the armed militias who fired at troops as they closed in on their position.

"The gallant troops swiftly responded with superior fire forcing the bandits to flee the camp in disarray into the surrounding forest. In the course of the encounter, two armed militia were neutralised," it said.

The update, which was signed by the Coordinator of DDMO, Major General John Enenche, said two locally made pistols were recovered from the militia.