

Rivers Killings - Expatriate's Corpse Found Floating on River

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THE Joint Task Force (JTF) in Rivers State has recovered the corpse of an expatriate floating on a river bounding Ogbogolo community.

This discovery was coming barely a day after the soldiers arrested six suspected cultists in the area for allegedly being behind Wednesday murder of three chiefs and two women in the community.

Spokesman of the JTF and army PRO in the state, Major Sagir Musa, told Sunday Vanguard on phone that the corpse was recovered in the early hours of yesterday, adding that it would be handed over to the appropriate authority to determine the nationality, using scientific means. On how the corpse was found, he said that soldiers who had been on patrol in the area for some days sighted it floating on the river and with the help of the locals were able to recover it.

He said the soldiers would remain in the community due to an appeal to the JTF to allow the troops stay in the area until they were very sure of their security. Musa explained that the brigade commander, Brigadier General Sankiyaki Bello, had ordered the soldiers to extend their aggressive patrol to the surrounding creeks and neighbouring communities following a tip-off that some of the miscreants were taking refuge in these places.

Crisis had broken out in Ogogboro community last Wednesday when suspected cultists stormed a meeting of the community killing three chiefs and two others on the spot. They fled the town before the arrival of the JTF team. The state commissioner of police, Mr. Felix Ogbaudu had told Sunday Vanguard on phone some days ago that the arrow head of the cult action had been identified but was on the run.

How the expatriate died still remains a mystery. Could it be that he was hit by stray bullet during the mayhem in the town? Or was he abducted and later drowned at the river? When Sunday Vanguard pressed the JTF spokesman for comments along these lines, he said they were still investigating. Confirming the recovery of the corpse of the expatriate yesterday, the state commissioner of police said his men had not been able to place the identity because of the decomposed state. He said the remains had been deposited at a morgue.

According to him, the only record of a missing expatriate with the police was a Briton who was kidnapped some months ago and had not been released by his captors. He said the police would likely depend on relatives and others that may come forward to be able to identify the deceased.

"He was found already badly decomposed. So we could not identify him and we do not have any record of any other missing expatriate apart from the Briton who was kidnapped sometime ago and who is yet to be released," Ogbaudu stated, explaining: "So what we have done is to keep the corpse in the mortuary until someone comes to identify it. Already it is in the mortuary and we are investigating the matter surrounding his death."

The Briton, Dave Worth, was abducted by some heavily armed men on August 10 along NTA Road in Rivers State. Since then, nothing has been heard on his whereabouts. In another development, Sunday Vanguard learnt that some cultists again stormed Ozuoba Community in the state, Friday, to unleash terror in the area. Though it could not be confirmed by the police, community sources said about three houses were ransacked by the cultists, but no life was reportedly lost.

At press time, Sunday Vanguard gathered that soldiers had been deployed in the area. The JTF public relations officer, said the military would remain there for some time to ensure security returns fully to the place. He explained that the people of Ogogboro and other neighbouring communities passionately enjoined the soldiers to remain as they were afraid the security situation would deteriorate if they leave.