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BREAKING NEWS

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Soldiers kill RCCG pastor, injure 2 others in Delta

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BY EMMA AMAIZE & AKPOKONA OMAFUAIRE

OPURAJA — SOLDIERS have shot dead a pastor of the Redeemed Christian Church of God and injured about three others at the quiet Opuraja community in Okpe Local Government Area of Delta State.

The pastor said to be in his 30s was married with four children.

A security source said the soldiers, led by a Captain, came in two Hilux vans to conduct investigation in the community, but were allegedly mobbed by villagers, who misconstrued their motive, as they took away vigilante leader and community chairman.

The soldiers reportedly denied killing anybody, but admitted that they shot into the car when the villagers surged towards them.

The Orodje of Okpe kingdom, HRM, Mujakperuo Orhue 1, a retired army officer, was said to have waded into the matter to calm frayed nerves after the fracas.

He expressed his disappointment over the incident, saying the soldiers should not have fired at unarmed citizens.

The monarch, however, pleaded with the community leadership and Okpe Local Local Government Transition Committee chair, Chief James Augoye, to find ways of resolving the issues amicably.

Former Minister of Information, Prof. Sam Oyovbaire, who is from the community, confirmed that one person was killed and some persons injured, but said details were sketchy, as the soldiers claimed they fired to scare the crowd.

A villager, who spoke to Vanguard said: "I saw the soldiers, they came to the community, asking for the chairman of the community and vigilante leader. They told them that there was robbery incident on Warri/Sapele expressway and asked them to reveal the identity of the person who owns the farm from which the bandits collected the wood they used to barricade the road.

“They told the soldiers that none of the community people owns farm there, but the military men accused them of not doing their job effectively.

“We saw the soldiers carry them away in their Hilux van and drove to the expressway, where they tied them against their vehicles until it was 6 a.m.

“The youths mobilised and went to the scene where the community leaders were tied and when the army saw the crowd approaching, they started shooting indiscriminately.

“A group of soldiers in another Hilux van apparently heard the gunshots and rushed to the scene, that was how the pastor, who was standing by was shot and he died immediately.”

Opuraja community chairman, Mr Godwill Eyaguobor, said: “The youths in the community are not criminals, none has been caught robbing in the community or engaged in any act of violence.”

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