

military operation launched in the region.

documents. Other residents reportedly made distress calls to

The suspect was said to have led policemen to the

that investigation is ongoing," he said.

## 5 JTF members killed by armed men in Benue

By Peter Duru

**MAKURDI**—NO fewer than five members of the Civilian Joint Task Force, CJTF, in Benue State were, weekend, slaughtered in cold blood by armed men suspected to be the masterminds of the recent surge in kidnappings and violent crimes in the state.

*Vanguard* gathered from an eyewitness that the security agents were killed at Kundev council ward of Ukum Local Government Area of the state while they were holding a routine meeting.

According to the source, the heavily-armed men stormed Alaḅar, the ward headquarters of Kundev, on motorbikes, rode straight to the village hall where the meeting was being held, captured five of the Task Force

members and killed them.

The source said: "They invaded the community at noon on motorcycles and rode straight to where the meeting of members of the CJTF was being held in an office hall. That was where they caught and killed five of them, while other members escaped.

"After the killing, the armed men fled the scene, while shooting sporadically to scare people away. So nobody went close for fear of being killed."

Reacting, the state Chairman of CJTF, Alhaji Aliu Teshaku, who confirmed the killing, told *Vanguard* that the masterminds were responsible for the rising cases of kidnap and robberies in parts of the state.

Teshaku alleged that "they were killed by the suspected

gang leader's boys (names withheld) because we told him and his group that they must stop perpetrating crimes and the kidnap of innocent persons.

It was because we stepped in that the cases of kidnapping have been

brought under control.

Teshaku, who reiterated the resolve of CJTF to always assist security agencies to checkmate the perpetrators of violent crimes in the state, said despite the killing, CJTF would not relent in its responsibilities.



**Members of Association of Wuye Ultra Modern Market Allottees, AWUMMA, protesting their ejection and closure of their shops in Abuja, yesterday. NAN PHOTO.**