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Troops kill 35 herdsmen in Benue

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...1 soldier missing, another killed, 2 wounded

By Joseph Erunke

ABUJA-THE Defence Headquarters has said a total of 35 herdsmen terrorising Benue State, we're killed at the weekend.

This was even as it declared that one soldier was still mission, one other killed and two others wounded in the clearance operation troops of Operation Whirl Stroke embarked on at the weekend in Taraba, Nasarawa, Zamfara and Benue states.

The Acting Director of Defence Information, Brigadier General John Agim, in a statement, said a suspected bandit, one Adamu Abdullah, was also arrested in Nasarawa with deadly ammunition.



Troops mopping Sambisa forest

The Defence Headquarters' statement read thus: "Troops of Operation Whirl Stroke (OPWS) operating in Benue, Nasarawa, Taraba and Zamfara states conducted a four prong clearance operations during the weekend.

"At Umaisha and Toto Villages, troops ambushed the militia following a tipoff of a planned attack on the two villages.

" On the ensuing melee 1 x G3 rifle, 193 x 17.62 mm NATO, 81xG3 rifle ammunition, a locally made pistol and 1 FN magazine filled with round were recovered and one militia was killed.

"In another development, one Adamu Abdullahi, a suspected herdsman at Rukubi in Doma Local Government Area of Nasarawa state was arrested in possession of an ID card of the vigilante group of Nigeria, Nasarawa state command and a photograph in which he posed with an AK47 rifle.

"The suspect is still under interrogation and will be handed over to the police for prosecution after preliminary investigation.

“Similarly, clearance operation across Gwer West, Logo and Guma LGA’s of Benue State was conducted during the weekend. Troops made contact with heavily armed herdsmen around lower Benue and a militia camp at chetarer village. The troops engaged the militia and followed the pursuit with M135 Helicopter of their air component. This led to a large member of them being neutralized. In all, 35 herdsmen were neutralized and a large number of them escaped with gunshot injuries.

“However, a soldier was killed in action (KIA), 2 sustained slight injuries but have been treated and discharged. Also, 1 soldier is still missing in action.

“Furthermore, OPWS in Nasarawa State arrested one Musa Habu (aged 32 years) at Kolo close to Umiasha in Toto Local Government Council.

” Items recovered from the suspect include; 1 locally made pistol, 2 x cartridges, 1 Techno phone and hundred and thirty naira only. Preliminary investigation revealed that the suspect is linked with some suspected militia in that locality. He has been handed over to the DSS for further necessary action.

”In the same vein, troops of OPWS sector 3 Taraba, on patrol through Kwesati, Many-Garagun axis made contact with 8 bandits who were arrested and were armed with 2 AK47 rifle, 1 x K2 rifle and 2 x locally made gun.

” Ammunitions recovered from them include 56 rounds of 7.6mm, 25 rounds of k2, 3x cartridge, charms, phones amongst other items. Suspects and items are to be handed over to DSS for further investigation.”

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