

Policeman, 3 others killed as armed men invade Benue community

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By Peter Duru

Makurdi—A Police officer and three others were, yesterday, reportedly killed in a bloody shoot-out when known gunmen attacked Tse- Ujondo, Mechanic site and Tse- Uvia, Zaki Biam town in Ukum local government area of Benue State.

According to an eyewitness in the area, the attackers also burnt down the police checkpoint near the Zaki Biam Mechanic Village.

He said, “The attacks stormed the area on motorbikes around 10 am yesterday dressed in military uniforms and shooting radically.

“People started running and in the victims got killed. This is not the first time this type of incident is taking place in Zaki Biam.

“As I speak with you these armed men, who are loyal boys to the wanted militia leader, Mr Terwase Akwaza popularly known as Gana, have sacked all the surrounding villages and council wards in the area including, Ugbaam, Borikyo and Kundav wards.

“The incident has triggered a mass movement of people from Zaki Biam and surrounding villages who are fleeing their homes and communities in droves.”

Confirming the development in a statement, the Benue State Police Command Public Relations Officer, PPRO, Deputy Superintendent, DSP. Moses Yamu said among the dead was a small boy.

The statement read in part, “the command wishes to report that at about 11 am Thursday, information was received that some armed Shitile militia also known as “Ghana Boys” dressed in Police Mobile Force and Special Forces uniforms were approaching Zaki Biam town through bush paths, riding on Bajaj motorcycles.

“Their movement was in a bid to escape the ongoing joint security operation tagged “Whirl Stroke” targeted at their enclaves which forced them out, to possibly seek

refuge in the town.

“The Divisional Police Officer, DPO, of Ukum Division quickly alerted and mobilised the security forces around in order to repel the militia.

“An intense gun duel ensued in which regrettably, one Policeman who was fatally injured and his rifle taken away by the militia was rushed to the hospital alongside two yet to be identified civilians, a woman and a small boy, were confirmed dead at the hospital.