

## Policeman, soldier killed as gunmen attack military checkpoint in Sapele

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By Paul Olayemi

Two persons, a soldier and a policeman, were killed when gunmen reportedly attacked a military checkpoint in Oton, a suburb of Sapele in Sapele Local Government Area of Delta State, Sunday.

Sources told Vanguard that both men were shot dead when the bandits attacked the military post at the entrance of the community through the river.

A security source, who craved anonymity, told Vanguard that the gunmen exchanged gunfire with the security men on the post "and another batch of soldiers that heard the gunshots moved in to help battle the intruders, as I speak, one soldier has been confirmed dead."

The attackers were said to have fled the scene and made their way into the creek they came from.

A community source also disclosed that the gunmen stormed the community through the Oton River in Sapele to kidnap some prominent persons in the area.

The sources, however, said the security operatives were repelling the bandits when gunshots from the invading gunmen killed the two operatives.

It was not clear if any of the bandits were killed during the onslaught, which sources claimed had since caused tension in the community as the people are afraid of possible military attack following the massive deployment of men of 19th Battalion Nigerian Army, Koko, to the community.

### Oton Sapele community under siege

Meanwhile, men of the Joint Task Force, JTF, yesterday, invaded Otonyasere community in Sapele Local Government Area of Delta State.

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Men of the 19th battalion, Koko, Delta State, who carried out the joint operation invaded the community in search of guns said to have been carted away by the gunmen, who killed the two operatives, Sunday.

Reacting to the incident, Ashe Victor, a resident of the community told Vanguard: We have all vacated our houses and as I speak to you, we are in the bush and soldiers have completely taken over our homes.

"The soldiers, including police operatives are going from house to house picking young men, and the vigilantes have been invited too by the security men. Community folks, young and old, have fled into the forest for safety."

Another resident, Ajami Akpome, told Vanguard that they have not been able to access their home.

"We can't go into the community and you can't come out, some of us who came to town have not been able to see our family. We are under siege," he cried out.

### Police confirm killing of personnel

The Delta State Police Command, yesterday, confirmed the killing of a policeman and the soldier by gunmen at a military checkpoint.

The Police Public Relations Officer for Delta State Command, Onome Onovwakpoyeya, who confirmed the incident, said "two operatives were killed. We are investigating the incident."

No one has been arrested in connection with the attack at press time.

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