

# Bandits assemble Benue villagers, shoot 18 dead

By Peter Duru

**N**O fewer than 18 persons have been reportedly killed by suspected armed bandits at Mbaché community of Katsina-Ala Local Government Area, LGA, of Benue State.

Sunday Vanguard gathered that the bandits stormed the community Friday night at about 11pm and dragged their victims from their homes to a spot where they were all shot dead while some escaped with injuries.

The perpetrators were

said to have gained prominence for terrorising residents of the Sankera axis of the state comprising Katsina-Ala, Ukum and Logo LGAs.

Confirming the attack, the Katsina-Ala LGA Chairman, Justine Shaku, described them as terrorists, saying: "At about 11 pm yesterday (Friday) we received a distress call from the villagers that some group of terrorists had mobilised themselves and moved from house to house forcing people to follow them.

"I quickly mobilised the military officers that in Tor Doonga and, being a remote area, before they could reach there, the people had been killed and some wounded. As at Friday night, I was told it was 17 persons that were killed; today, 18 bodies have been confirmed dead. All of them were assembled in one place and killed.

"They are local terrorists. I no longer call them bandits because I am seeing elements of terrorism in their activities. Though they have external forces, they are terrorists within. There are those sponsoring and helping them to perpetrate the acts. The locals are majorly the people who are doing it."

Contacted, Special Adviser to the Governor on Internal Security, Chief Joseph Har, confirmed the development, noting that he was yet to receive full details of what happened.

Meanwhile, the State Police Command, in a terse statement by its Public Relations Officer, Superintendent Catherine Anene, confirmed the incident.

The statement read: "The attack in Katsina-Ala is confirmed. Meanwhile, investigation is ongoing as normalcy has returned in the area. Details will get to you as soon as the police on ground sends report."

## er NNPC's strategic goals

the principles of diversity and inclusion as well as performance based career progression via a transparent process.

"We also noted that limited information is in the public domain on NNPC's operations since transition to a private commercial entity. This has led to misleading commentary which we believe is not in tandem with the strides achieved by the company.

"We empathise with the management team over the state of onshore operations with over seven thousand illegal refineries destroyed and over five thousand illegal connections removed.

"We reiterate that any attack on crude oil and gas facilities as well as illegal refining are acts of criminality and economic sabotage. Therefore, all

activities hindering oil and gas exploration and production in Nigeria must be sanctioned.

"We appreciate that the PIA has made provisions for the Host communities' development and also provided for sustainable funding. We trust that Government Security Agencies will do the needful and ensure that crude oil theft, illegal refining and activities of pipeline vandals are stopped to allow for investment and growth of Nigeria's oil and gas sector.

"We appreciate the support that all tiers of Government and the Nigerian citizens continue to give NNPC and trust that this will be sustained by the present administration of H.E. President Bola Ahmed Tinubu."