

Two soldiers, three others killed in ambush by armed herdsmen in Benue



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By Peter Duru

At least two soldiers and three others have been reportedly killed by suspected armed herdsmen at Anyiase community, near Jato Aka in Kwande Local Government Area, LGA, of Benue state.

Recall that several communities around Jato Aka have repeatedly come under attacks from armed herdsmen who, over time, sacked several of the communities, forcing the locals to flee to the center of Jato Aka for safety.

It was gathered that the two soldiers were killed in an ambush by the bandits who Wednesday attacked the community, where three of the locals were also killed. According to the source, "We were told that the bandits attacked the community killing three persons and the soldiers who were on patrol ran into them and in the ensuing fight two soldiers were killed and some of the bandits were also killed. "The development has forced a lot of people to flee their homes while many ran to catch a glimpse of the remains of the soldiers." Lamenting the development, the President General of Mzough U Tiv, MUT, worldwide and Chairman of leaders of Benue Socio-Cultural organisations, Chief Iorbee Ihagh, who hails from Kwande LGA said, "Five persons made up of two soldiers and three natives were killed in the attack." Chief Ihagh appealed to Governor Hyacinth Alia to intensify efforts to improve the security of the state's people and urged the Benue people to learn to always defend themselves. He charged the people to "re-enact the 1804 traditional ways of confronting the invaders through their poisonous arrow to defend themselves." The Special Adviser to the Governor on Internal Security, Chief Joseph Har, also confirmed the development. He said he had been making efforts to reach the commander of the team without success.

Operation Whirl Stoke, OPWS, a joint military spike operation in the state, could not be reached for comment, and the Police Public Relations Officer, Chief Superintendent, CSP, Catherine Anene, declined to comment on the matter.

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The Chairman of Kwande LGA, Mr. Vitalis Neji, did not respond to calls and text messages sent to his phone.

Meanwhile, the Chief Press Secretary to the Benue State Governor, Tersoo Kula, in a statement Thursday, said the Benue State Executive Council, at its meeting, presided over by Governor Hyacinth Alia, condemned the tragic murder of the “two soldiers from the Nigerian Army, who were murdered by armed herders while on duty, protecting civilians in Turan, Kwande LGA.”