

16 Feared Dead As Bandits Attack Katsina Village



By Ibrahim Musa Giginyu, Katsina

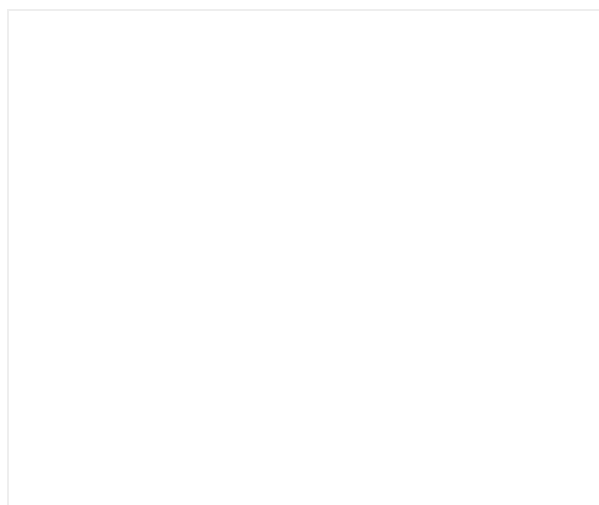
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At least, 16 villagers are feared dead, while many others were declared missing, following an attack by bandits on Kiliya village near Bagagadi in Dutsinma Local Government Area of Katsina State.

A source from the area said the attack occurred on Friday shortly after residents had concluded Juma'at prayers and were relaxing, holding discussion in the spirit of the Sallah celebrations.

The source explained that he first saw two bandits riding on a motorcycle.



According to him, villagers began running upon sighting them, but the attackers ordered them to stop. He said the bandits later went to a mechanic's house and suddenly opened fire on residents and other passersby.

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“After the Friday prayers, we were sitting together with other villagers. I called a boy who was selling local drinks and bought a bowl from him when the bandits arrived. I saw two of them on a motorcycle. People started running and they told us not to run, but suddenly they began shooting.

“The boy and I ran into a house and hid. While in hiding, we heard screams and gunshots everywhere. After some minutes, the shooting stopped. When we came out, we found the lifeless

bodies of about 16 people, including some of my uncles and cousins,” he said.

According to him, after the attack more than 400 people have sought refuge in Bagagadi village, while many others have relocated to Radda village for safety. He added that several residents are still unaccounted for following the attack.

He said there were indications that some victims were killed on their farms, as several bodies were found in farmlands around the village.

Another eyewitness, a 14-year-old boy, said he saw the first motorcycle arrived and that more attackers followed after the initial gunmen had opened fire indiscriminately on the villagers.

A resident of neighbouring Bagagadi village told our reporter that more than 30 displaced persons from Kiliya village, mostly women and children, are currently taking shelter in his house.

It was also gathered that the attack may have been a reprisal. Sources said two suspected bandits were reportedly killed by villagers a few days earlier.

“From the nature of this attack, it appears to be a reprisal attack because a few days ago, two bandits were killed, and reports indicated that they belonged to a notorious gang. Perhaps that is why they came to the village and carried out this attack,” a source said.

However, when contacted, the Katsina State police spokesperson, DSP Abubakar Sadiq Aliyu said, the report of the attack was yet to reach the command, but promised to reach out as soon as the command receives the report. He was yet to get back to our reporter as the time of filing this report.