

Sokoto: Bandits Gun Down 10-Year-Old, Abduct Married Women, Children



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No fewer than 43 residents have been abducted by suspected bandits in coordinated attacks on Takatsaba and Tarah villages in Sabon Birni Local Government Area of Sokoto State.

Local sources said the attackers, who were armed with sophisticated weapons, stormed the two communities late on Wednesday, firing sporadically before moving from house to house in search of victims.

A resident of Takatsaba village, who requested anonymity because some of his relatives were among those abducted, told Daily Trust that the bandits invaded the village at about 11:30 p.m. and spent about an hour carrying out the attack.

According to him, the gunmen killed the 10-year-old son of Abdullahi Ado's family and abducted 32 people from seven households.

He said those abducted included nine persons from the home of Mamman Dogo; five from the family of Abdullahi Ado, whose 10-year-old son was killed during the attack; the wife of the village's Chief Imam; two persons from the home of the Mai Unguwa; two orphaned children from the family of the late Mallam Sani; eight members of Mallam Abubakar's household, comprising his wives and young children; and five persons from the home of Amadu Siro.

The source added that some residents were still unaccounted for because many fled into surrounding bushes during the attack.

"People scattered in different directions while trying to save their lives. Up till now, we cannot account for everyone because of the confusion that followed the attack," he said.

He said security operatives did not arrive for the reinforcement during the attack.

"Our security personnel are doing their best to protect us, but this time the bandits outsmarted them. The security team was positioned on the western side of the village, while the attackers entered from the south-east and carried out the operation before leaving," he said.

The resident recalled that the same village came under attack eight days earlier, but security personnel successfully repelled the assailants.

He identified five of those abducted from Abdullahi Ado's family as Abubakar, Basira, Amira, Aisha and Naja'atu, adding that all of them were aged between 6-16 years.

The resident expressed frustration over what he described as the failure to provide adequate protection for the communities.

"We are not asking for electricity, water or any other project. What we need is security so that we can return to our farms and produce food. That is our only request," he said.

He also alleged that community members feared speaking out their mind because they believed they could easily be traced and targeted.

In neighbouring Tarah village, another resident who also requested anonymity said the attackers arrived at about 11:30 p.m. and remained in the community for about 50 minutes.

He said the bandits shot and injured three residents, who are currently receiving treatment at a hospital.

According to him, the attackers abducted 20 people but later released nine of them after reaching a river crossing where they were unable to move with all the captives.

He said most of the 11 victims still in captivity are married women.

The resident also lamented the absence of security reinforcement during the attack, saying the bandits appeared to have adopted new tactics of planting IED to prevent response from security operatives.

He accused authorities of neglecting the affected communities, alleging that they had received little or no assistance despite repeated attacks.

He further claimed that before the last Ramadan, security authorities confiscated four locally procured guns that villagers had bought to defend themselves.

“We are only asking Nigerians to remember us in their prayers,” he appealed.

Another resident of Tarah village, who also spoke on condition of anonymity, confirmed that 11 persons were abducted during the raid.

He said residents were keeping vigil in different parts of the village when the assailants infiltrated the community and carried out the attack.

“Whenever night falls, everyone in the village keeps vigil in their respective areas. Despite that, the bandits still found their way into the village,” he said.

He identified the abductees as Marsiya Ya’u Gurmu, Aisha Ya’u Gurmu, Hadiza Illiti, Hajara Haruna Na’ita, Talata Atamo, Firdausi Lawali, Hafsat Na’inna, Maryam Gandi, Daudiya Haruna,

Aisha Isaka and Samira Hussaini.

The latest attacks came barely days after residents of Sabon Birni raised concerns over renewed bandit attacks and the growing use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) by criminal groups operating in the eastern part of Sokoto State.

When contacted, the spokesman of the Sokoto State Police Command, DSP Ahmad Rufai, said he would verify the incident. However, as of the time of filing this report, he had yet to provide further feedback.