

Apprehension as gunmen kill seven in Katsina

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Fear has gripped residents of Sayaya community in Matazu Local Government Area of [Katsina State](#) following the killing of seven people by gunmen suspected to be bandits.

The incident which occurred on Thursday morning at about 9:00am, has left residents apprehensive about a repeat of the attack especially due to the alleged withdrawal of military operatives in the area.

The gunmen, said to be in their numbers, had attacked the community shooting indiscriminately, moving from house to house, and breaking into shops and carting away valuables that included food items.

According to the Information Officer of the council area, Mansir Bala, the bandits killed seven people, six men and one female, and injured several others, most of whom are still in the hospital being attended to by medical personnel.

Bala identified those killed during the attack to include Lawal Ciki Sayaya, Abdullahi Mustapha, Yalili Mairuwa, Marme Dantani (female), Ado Isau Maharba, Salma Tasiu, and Ibrahim Uncle.

He said that the victims were buried the same day with the funeral prayer led by Mal. Lawal, and were laid to rest at the Sha'iskawa graveyard with hundreds of mourners in attendance.

The executive chairman of the council, Hon. Shamsuddeen Muhd Sayaya, his deputy, Hon. Abubakar Sulaiman, along with elected and appointed councilors, were among those that attended the funeral.

But the community is said to be restless as it was learnt that military operatives that were deployed to the area to tackle insecurity, have been withdrawn.

Recall that the council area is where the late military officer, Maj. Gen. Rabe Abubakar and his wife, were abducted by bandits last month.

While Abubakar died in captivity, his wife was later rescued during a military operation, though she sustained gunshot wound on her leg.

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Residents of the community said before the recent incident, they had been living peacefully for many months after the local government reached a truce with the gunmen.

They blamed notorious bandit leader Kachalla Muhammadu, who is said to have a camp in the forest outskirts of the council area, and has been operating freely in the region for a long time.

Kachalla was said to have been mastermind who led the kidnapping operation that resulted in Abubakar's death, as well as deaths of several others who were abducted in the Matazu area.

During a recent operation, troops of the Nigerian Army were said to have surrounded Kachalla's camp, killed many gunmen, while others fled with various gunshot wounds.

But Kachalla was said to have escaped into the bush and could not be captured.

Residents attribute the attack on Sayaya by the gunmen due to the withdrawal of soldiers from the Matazu forests, and that the attack had occurred almost immediately after the withdrawal.

They added that when the soldiers were in the area carrying out their routine operations, there was peace because the gunmen had left the area. But as soon as the soldiers left, the gunmen returned.

Residents said that just recently, Kachalla and his men had blocked the Karaduwa to Rimaye road, where they kidnapped many travelers and terrorized villagers.

They, therefore, called on government to return the [military](#) to the area to help tackle the security situation in the area.