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January 5, 2026 by [Bolaji Ogundele](#), [Abuja](#), [Justina Asishana](#), [Minna](#) and [Olaide Oyelude](#)

Hunt down terrorists, Tinubu orders



President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has ordered a manhunt for terrorists responsible for the killing of scores of civilians and the abduction of women and children in Niger State.

The directive followed coordinated terrorist attacks on communities in Agwarra and Borgu Local Government Areas of the state.

No fewer than 42 people were killed in brutal raids on villages and a busy market.

Security forces also intensified counter-terrorism operations that led to the killing of over 50 bandits across Kano, Katsina and Kogi states.

The Niger attack occurred on Saturday at Kasuwan Daji market in Sukumbara village.

Reacting yesterday, President Tinubu condemned the killings and kidnappings, describing them as a “grave assault on innocent Nigerians.”

In a statement by his Special Adviser on Information and Strategy, Mr. Bayo Onanuga, the President directed the Minister of Defence, the Chief of Defence Staff, Service Chiefs, the Inspector-General of Police and the Director-General of the Department of State Services (DSS) to track down the attackers and ensure the immediate rescue of abducted victims.

He said: “These terrorists have tested the resolve of our country and its people. They must face the full consequences of their criminal actions.

“No matter who they are or what their intent is, they must be hunted down.

“They, and all those who aid, abet or enable them, will be caught and brought to justice.”

President Tinubu extended condolences to the families of the victims and the government and people of Niger State, assuring them of the Federal Government’s resolve to restore peace.

He directed security agencies to scale up operations around vulnerable communities, particularly those close to forests used as terrorist hideouts.

The President said: "These times demand our humanity. We must stand together as one people and confront these monsters in unison."

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"United, we can and must defeat them and reclaim peace in our communities."

The terrorists were said to be fleeing intensified military pressure from air strikes in the Northwest.

They stormed the community around 4:30 p.m., firing sporadically, burning stalls, looting shops and abducting residents, including schoolchildren.

Eyewitnesses said the attackers came from the Kainji Lake National Park forest along Kabe District, spreading terror across villages in Agwarra and Borgu council areas.

Local accounts initially put the death toll at 42, with residents claiming that 37 people were killed in Kasuwan Daji near Papiri, while five others died in Kaima village.

A joint security assessment later confirmed 30 fatalities, with several people still missing.

The terrorists also attacked a Catholic mission house and school in Sukumbara village, destroying property and stealing motorcycles and cash.

A resident said: "The government and security agencies should come to our aid. These terrorists have been coming out of the forest for about a week now, wreaking havoc."

"Some of the abducted children are pupils of St. Mary's Catholic Primary and Secondary Schools, Papiri."

Confirming the attack on the Catholic mission, the Director of Communications of the Kontagora Diocese, Rev. Fr. Stephen Kabirat, said the parish priest narrowly escaped abduction.

"They came to abduct the parish priest, but he escaped before they gained access to his quarters."

"They destroyed religious items, carted away two motorcycles and cash worth over N200,000, and abducted villagers, including children," he said.

Another villager said many communities had fled into the bush out of fear.

"Some villagers are now sleeping in the forest because of continued terrorist activities," he said.

The terrorists struck in the Agwarra local government in November when they abducted pupils, teachers and workers of the St. Mary's Catholic Primary and Secondary Schools, Papiri. They were freed from the abductors custody about a month after.

Bago: attack 'cruel'

Niger State Governor, Mohammed Umaru Bago, described the attacks as "cruel and nefarious".

He lamented that victims were Muslims and Christians from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

“It is disturbing and worrying to begin the year with such unfortunate incidents,” the governor said through his Commissioner for Information and Orientation, Mr. Obed Nuhu Nana.

He said the attackers were terrorists fleeing Kainji Lake National Park towards Kebbi and Rijau areas, allegedly out of fear of further military strikes.

“They killed innocent traders, attacked a police outpost in Shafacci village and a Catholic missionary school in Sukumbara, carting away motorcycles and destroying property,” the statement said.

Bago assured residents that a joint security task force was already trailing the terrorists with a view to rescuing abducted victims.

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Abiodun demands justice

Ogun State Governor and Chairman of the Southern Governors' Forum, Prince Dapo Abiodun, condemned the massacre, describing it as “callous, senseless and a crime against humanity.”

He commiserated with Bago and the people of Niger State, urging security agencies to hunt down and prosecute the perpetrators.

“This cowardly onslaught on innocent citizens going about their lawful business represents a stain on our national conscience,” Abiodun said.

“The perpetrators must be completely crushed with all the resources available to the Nigerian state.”

Military strikes back in Kano, Katsina

As outrage mounted over the Niger killings, the Nigerian military recorded significant successes against terrorists in the North-West and North-Central.

Troops of the Joint Task Force, supported by the Air Component of Operation Fansan Yamma, neutralised at least 23 bandits fleeing Kano State after coordinated attacks on Shanono and Tsanyawa Local Government Areas.

According to the Nigerian Army, the bandits launched the attacks late Thursday night into Friday morning but were repelled by ground troops.

Intelligence later revealed that the fleeing terrorists regrouped in Karaduwa village, Matazu LGA of Katsina State, to bury their dead.

“A precision air strike was conducted, resulting in the neutralisation of at least 23 terrorists,” said Major Zubairu Babatunde, Acting Assistant Director, Army Public Relations, 3 Brigade.

Several weapons and motorcycles were destroyed in the strike

Troops kill bandits, arrest logistics supplier in Kogi

In Kogi State, troops of 12 Brigade Nigerian Army killed three bandits and arrested a suspected logistics supplier during coordinated patrols in Kabba-Bunu and Yagba West Local Government Areas.

Acting on intelligence, troops laid ambushes along known bandit routes, recovering AK-47 rifles, ammunition and locally fabricated weapons.

The arrested suspect, identified as Sunday Adedotun, was found with supplies allegedly meant for bandits.

“These operations underscore sustained pressure on criminal networks and their enablers,” the Army said.

Army destroys armoury in Taraba

Troops of Operation Whirl Stroke (OPWS) intercepted the wife of a notorious criminal kingpin, John Gata, and neutralised a major arms cache in Amadu Village, Takum Local Government Area, Taraba.

A credible source at Army Headquarters told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Sunday that actionable intelligence indicated the suspect’s wife was moving from Amadu Village through Wukari, Kyado, and Zaki-Biam toward Gboko.

The source said the troops of Sub Sector 1A promptly established a snap roadblock at Zaki-Biam, successfully intercepting the woman without incident.

He said the suspect later led troops to the criminal’s hidden armoury, where they recovered 13 AK-47 rifles, 38 magazines, 690 rounds of 7.62mm special ammunition, and four hand grenades.

According to him, the facility was subsequently destroyed to deny further use by the criminal network.

He confirmed that troops returned safely to base and noted that the security situation in the area remained calm but unpredictable, with civil-military relations cordial.

“Troops’ morale and operational readiness continue to remain high as fighting and confidence-building patrols persist in the region,” he said

The military high command lauded troops for their professionalism and assured Nigerians of continued aggressive operations.

The Army urged citizens to provide timely intelligence, stressing that collaboration remains vital to defeating terrorism.

Atiku, Obi seek action

Former Vice President Atiku Abubakar and ex-presidential candidate Peter Obi condemned the attacks, calling for urgent and decisive action to halt the worsening insecurity.

In a statement, Atiku described the attacks as heinous and deeply troubling.

He said the brazen assault on defenceless rural communities underscored the fragile security situation in parts of the country.

The former vice president extended condolences to the victims' families and expressed solidarity with the people and government of Niger State.

He urged security agencies to act swiftly to secure the safe and unconditional release of all abducted persons, particularly the schoolchildren, and to restore confidence in affected communities.

Atiku stressed that the protection of lives and property remains the foremost duty of any government, calling for a strengthening of Nigeria's security architecture and the arrest and prosecution of those responsible for the attacks.

Obi condemned the violence and renewed his call for leadership anchored on unity, truth, accountability and compassion.

He said Nigeria must confront insecurity with honesty and resolve, noting that leadership thrives on trust and transparency.

He urged authorities to place the welfare of citizens, especially the poor, weak and vulnerable, at the centre of national priorities, stressing that a nation's true measure lies in the dignity and safety it offers its people.

Obi also called for a shift in national priorities toward investing in hospitals, schools, jobs and productivity, rather than waste and extravagance.

He said addressing insecurity requires not just force, but a recommitment to justice, accountability and shared sacrifice.