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Many bandits killed as Army, DSS, volunteer foil attack in Niger



- **Govt condemns attack**
- **From Nicholas Kalu, Abuja and Justina Asishana, Minna**

Troops of the Nigerian Army, operatives of the **Department of State Services (DSS)**, and volunteer forces yesterday foiled an attack by over 300 bandits in Niger State, killing many of them, The Nation gathered.

It was learnt that the foiled attempt by the bandits would have been a large-scale attack on Bagna and Erena communities in Shiroro Local Government Area.

A source said the move by the operatives followed advance intelligence on the planned attack.

According to the source, as the bandits moved to storm Bagna and Erena communities, the security operatives and volunteers ambushed them.

Though not specific on the number, the source added that scores of the bandits were killed in the ambush.

“Over 300 bandits armed with dangerous weapons and on motorcycles were headed to the communities. Unfortunately for them, security operatives and local vigilantes, who had credible intelligence on their movements, ambushed them. Scores were killed while many others fled toward the Makuba and Allawa axis.

“We are witnessing an increase in collaboration between security agencies and local volunteer forces. This has led to a bridging of security gaps, and making the first line of defence against insecurity very effective,” the source said.

The source further said their actions have helped strengthen security in several communities across the country.

It was learnt that residents of the communities expressed gratitude to the security operatives and volunteer forces for their efforts.

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"We are very happy. We thank the joint security forces for protecting us," a resident of one of the communities said.

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However, the state government condemned the attack, saying it led to the loss of lives, destruction of property and displacement of people of the affected communities.

In a statement, the Secretary to the State Government (SSG), Alhaji Abubakar Usman, described the attacks as barbaric, inhumane and an affront to the peace and security efforts of the administration.

The government expressed sorrow over the incident and extended condolences to the families of those who lost their lives, as well as to the people of Shiroro

"The Government of Niger State is deeply pained by this tragic development. These mindless acts of violence against innocent citizens are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. We share in the grief of the affected families and assure them that the government stands firmly with them in this difficult time," the SSG stated.

The government then called on residents to remain calm, vigilant and continue to cooperate with security agencies by providing timely and credible information that will aid ongoing operations while reiterating the commitment of the administration of governor to safeguard lives and property across the state.

"Government will not relent in its efforts to restore lasting peace and ensure that perpetrators of these dastardly acts are brought to justice," the statement added.

The meeting was attended by the deputy governor, security advisers, and traditional leaders, including the Gbong Gwom Jos, Da. Jacob Gyang Buba.