

# Sokoto: Police confirm fresh killings by bandits in Isa community

**Olakunle Maruf** January 13, 2026



Communities in Isa Local Government Area of Sokoto State are once again reeling from renewed bandit attacks, believed to be linked to gunmen loyal to the notorious bandit leader Bello Turji.

The latest wave of violence has forced residents to flee en masse, amid growing concerns about the creeping territorial expansion of armed groups operating across the Sokoto–Zamfara axis.

The spokesman for the Sokoto State Police Command, DSP Ahmed Rufai, confirmed on Tuesday that two people were killed and an unknown number abducted in the latest incident at Bargaja village in southern Isa LGA. He noted that a fuller account would be provided once the Divisional Police Officer in the area submits his field report.

“Two were killed and some people were kidnapped, but we don’t yet have the exact number,” DSP Rufai said. “We will get fuller details from the DPO of the local government.”

Security alerts and residents’ accounts suggest that Bargaja had already been raided days before the latest confirmed attack. Sources described this as part of an ongoing campaign aimed at expanding Turji’s influence over vulnerable rural settlements linking Sokoto and Zamfara States.

The area has long been considered a corridor for armed activity due to its proximity to unpoliced forest reserves and abandoned farmlands.

Despite repeated assurances from security agencies and government officials, rural communities across Isa, Sabon Birni, and parts of eastern Sokoto continue to experience attacks, kidnappings, and forced displacement attributed to bandit groups operating in the North-West.

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Over the weekend, eyewitnesses reported seeing a convoy of displaced villagers from Tidibale ward making their way into Isa town after what they described as a “total collapse of security” in their communities.

Residents said the movement of displaced civilians has become increasingly frequent in recent months, as more farming and pastoral settlements come under threat.

"The whole of Tidibale ward has been devastated by Bello Turji," a resident alleged in a written statement circulated to journalists.

He urgently appealed to federal, state, and local authorities for intervention, warning that civilians were fast becoming "refugees in their own land."

The appeal also claimed that, of the 10 political wards in Isa LGA, only a few remain functional, with others either partially deserted or reportedly under the control of armed elements. Local leaders fear that the depopulation of villages could lead to long-term instability and undermine food production in the region.

Some residents expressed frustration over what they see as the inability of security forces to reclaim vacated communities, questioning how gunmen have managed to maintain a presence even after villagers flee.

As of the time of filing this report, neither the Sokoto State Government nor the Isa Local Government Council had issued a formal reaction or update regarding the situation.

Security analyst Mallam Bashar Altine, who hails from Isa LGA, described the situation as "deeply worrying," noting that many displaced residents are now living in public schools and temporary shelters in Isa town. Others have relocated to neighbouring Sabon Birni, while some have crossed into Niger Republic in search of safety.

Altine also confirmed that Turji "is very much alive" and continues to operate actively within parts of Isa and surrounding communities.

Similarly, Professor Muazu Alhaji Shamaki, a professor of Demography at Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, confirmed the attack and called on government authorities to take immediate action to prevent further humanitarian and security deterioration.

DSP Rufai reiterated that the police command is awaiting detailed feedback from its field officers and assured that the media will be briefed once the official findings are compiled.

The renewed attacks in Isa come amid wider concerns over the persistence of banditry in the North-West, where communities have endured years of farm disruptions, mass displacements, school abductions, and shrinking civic presence due to insecurity.