

UPDATED: Bandits kill 10, injure others in Plateau

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- Hoodlums kill another four traders in transit to Pankshin • Youths, women protest rampant cases of killings
- Two soldiers, one vigilante killed as bandits attack JTF Base, Bauchi community • GOC escapes ambush in Kebbi

BANDITS terrorising parts of Plateau State struck again, killing 10 people and injuring others in two communities, Dorowa Babuje and Jol, in Barakin-Ladi and Riyom local government areas, respectively.

Still reeling from the Sunday attack, hoodlums ambushed six traders on Monday as they headed to Pankshin local government area to sell shoes, killing four of them, while the remaining two escaped with injuries.

This came as youths and women in Barakin-Ladi staged a public protest due to rampant cases of killings in their localities by blocking the major highway in the area, linking Jos, the state capital, and other towns in the state.

National president of the Berom Youth Moulder Association (BYM), Mr Dalyop Solomon, who confirmed the attacks to the Nigerian Tribune, disclosed that nine persons were killed in Dorowa Babuje and one in Jol.

Solomon said the two communities were attacked simultaneously around 8 p.m., shooting sporadically at different directions immediately they arrived in the communities.

He added that preliminary investigations concerning recent attacks in the areas showed that the bandits, acting in collaboration with some elements in parts of the state, carried out the attacks.

Solomon said: "We issued out an early warning signal about the attack but received no response from security agencies. Our findings, however, revealed that the attack was led by a notorious bandit, known as 'Yellow', who had been exiled from Kaduna."

He also denied the claim made by the state chapter of the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association (MACBAN) that some of its members were killed by locals, accusing it of blame game to wreck havoc on communities.

In the similar occurrence, the six traders heading to Pankshin council area were ambushed, with four of them killed close to Mangu Hale, in Mangu Local Government Area.

A source close to one of the families of the deceased, who simply identified himself as Ibrahim, said the vehicle conveying them came under fire, adding that two of the traders escaped by the whiskers.

He added that they set out very early on Monday to ply their trade at a market in Pankshin, but could not make it, due to the attack on their vehicle.

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An official of the Traders and Marketing Association, Jos Main Market branch, who craved anonymity, confirmed the incident.

The source said: "The incident was a rude shock to us. These were innocent traders travelling to sell shoes in Pankshin. We have spoken with two of them, who escaped, but the other four were unlucky. This is a sad development."

There was palpable fear in parts of Jos where the traders hailed from, as the people in the area and other adjoining places were scared of possible reprisal.

Meanwhile, youths and women from Barakin-Ladi Local Government Area trooped out on Monday to protest the killings by blocking the only major highway in the area.

It was gathered that the road was barricaded for hours before some government officials intervened alongside security agencies.

One of the protesters, Jeremiah Godiya, said: "We have suffered as a community for too long in the hands of these bandits; the attacks have become a regular occurrence without much intervention from both the government and security agencies.

"If they cannot protest us, it is better we are informed so that we can have our destinies in our hands."

Two soldiers, one vigilante killed as bandits attack JTF Base, Bauchi community

Meanwhile, the Bauchi State police command has confirmed that two soldiers attached to the 33 Artillery Brigade, Bauchi and a vigilante member were killed during an encounter with bandits in Gwana District of Alkaleri Local Government Area.

The development followed bandits' attack on the community and the Joint Task Force (JTF) Base at Gwana District, on Sunday, at about 4:32 p.m.

The State Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), SP Nafiu Habib, in a statement on Monday evening, said: "Three members of the affected community were also abducted and no fewer than seven bandits were killed by the Anti-Kidnapping Unit of the police (AKU) during the gun duel."

The police spokesperson said that additional security forces had been deployed to restore order, protect displaced civilians, and prevent further attacks.

Bauchi villagers flee, relocate to Gombe, Plateau, Adamawa

In another development, residents of Gwana District in Alkaleri Local Government Area of Bauchi State have started moving en masse to the neighbouring states of Gombe, Plateau and Adamawa following recent attacks by bandits.

A source from the area told the Nigerian Tribune that throughout last week, many of the villages in the area were attacked, with some people killed and many others injured.

A resident, who pleaded to be anonymous, said some of the villages have been deserted, as residents are afraid for their lives.

The people are appealing for quick intervention by the state government and security agencies.

GOC escapes ambush in Kebbi, as troops kill five terrorists, recover arms

Meanwhile, troops of the 8 Division of the Nigerian Army have thwarted an ambush on the convoy of the General Officer Commanding (GOC) 8 Division, Major General Bemgha Koughna, killing five suspected Lakurawa terrorists and recovering a cache of arms and ammunition.

The incident occurred near Mayama Hill in Kebbi State, as the GOC, who also serves as Commander, Sector 2 of Operation Fansan Yamma, was on his way to visit frontline troops deployed in the state.

In a statement issued on Monday by the acting Deputy Director, Army Public Relations, Lieutenant-Colonel Olaniyi Osoba, the convoy was said to have come under sudden and heavy gunfire while navigating a forested and volatile stretch of the area.

"The troops responded swiftly and decisively, overpowering the attackers with superior firepower. Five terrorists were killed, and the ambush was successfully repelled," the statement said.

The Army noted that the attempted attack was part of ongoing efforts by the Lakurawa Terrorist Group (LTG) to undermine security operations in the North-West, but assured that the military remains resolute.

Following the exchange of fire, troops conducted a clearance operation around the ambush site, recovering one OJC gun, one PKT gun, two AK-47 rifles, four AK-47 magazines, a bandolier of PKT ammunition, several rounds of 12.7mm ammunition, two mobile phones, five motorcycles and a camel bag containing N840,000 believed to be logistics funds.