

Banditry: Eight killed in Kebbi attack, 16 abducted in Zamfara

December 30, 2025 12:03 am



File photo: Terrorists

| Animasahun Salman, Marahaji Altine and Dare Akogun

No fewer than eight persons have been killed following coordinated attacks by gunmen on Kaiwa, Gelawu and Gebbe villages in Shanga Local Government Area of Kebbi State, triggering panic and mass displacement of residents.

This was as 16 women were abducted in Zamfara State with two others killed. The incidents happened on a day, bandits demanded N500m for the release of five road construction workers kidnapped in Kwara State on December 15.

The renewed attacks come only days after the US security forces conducted an air raid on terrorists' enclaves in Sokoto State.

Local sources said the attackers stormed the Kebbi community without warning, firing sporadically and causing widespread fear and confusion. The assault, described as the worst in the area in many years, forced residents to abandon their homes in search of safety.

“The community is traumatised. We have not experienced this level of violence in a long time,” a resident said.

Confirming the incident to *The PUNCH*, the spokesman for the Kebbi State Police Command, SP Bashir Usman, said seven victims died during the attacks, while one additional victim later died while receiving treatment.

He added that another injured victim is currently responding to medical care.

“Security agencies have sustained coordinated operations within the affected areas, while intensified patrols and surveillance are ongoing to forestall further breaches,” Usman said, noting that he could not disclose further details because the operation was still ongoing.

Residents described the attacks as devastating, saying the affected communities had not witnessed such violence in many years.

“The entire area is in shock. People are afraid to return home,” a resident said.

Security operatives have since been deployed to the affected villages to restore calm, while residents appealed to the state government to strengthen security in the area.

Efforts to reach traditional leaders in the affected communities for comments were unsuccessful as of the time of filing this report.

Meanwhile, worried residents appealed to the state government and security agencies to urgently intervene, describing the attack as deadly and devastating.

In a related development in Zamfara State, sixteen women were kidnapped, two were killed and several others sustained serious injuries when gunmen believed to be bandits attacked Sabon-Layi village of Wanke district in Gusau Local Government Area.

The attack came barely three weeks after bandits collected N8m ransom from the same village and released seven women they had earlier kidnapped.

An indigene of the village, Ibrahim Garba, told The PUNCH that the bandits, who were riding motorcycles, entered the village around 1am last Sunday and went from house to house, kidnapping only women.

According to Garba, the bandits kidnapped several women and attempted to take them into the forest, but some of the victims refused to go.

“As such, the bandits opened fire, as a result of which two women were killed and several others sustained serious injuries,” he said.

“The injured women are currently receiving treatment at the Yariman Bakura Specialist Hospital in Gusau,” Garba added.

He maintained that 16 women, some of them with their children, were currently in the bandits’ camp.

Garba expressed disgust that the bandits had recently collected the sum of N8m from the community for the release of seven women they kidnapped.

“Just recently, the bandits kidnapped seven women from this village and we had to pay the sum of N8m to ensure their release,” he said.

“As I am talking to you now, the village is almost deserted because of the fear of the bandits.

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“They have taken all of our animals and are now taking away our wives. This is a very precarious situation,” Garba cried out.

The spokesperson for the Zamfara State Police Command, DSP Yazid Abubakar, did not pick up his phone for comment after several attempts.

Meanwhile, bandits have demanded a ransom of N500m for the release of five road construction workers kidnapped in Kwara State.

The PUNCH had reported that the workers were abducted on December 15, 2025, in at a Kwara State Government road construction site along the Sabaja/Owa-Onire Road in Isin Local Government Area.

Speaking with journalists on Monday in Ilorin, the families, led by Mr. Dare Boyinbogun, accused the state government of neglect and said the kidnappers had contacted them with the huge ransom demand.

Boyinbogun recalled that the suspected bandits invaded the construction site at about 11:40am, whisking away Ademola Afolabi, Abdullahi Lade, Emmanuel Okuwadare Kayode, Fatai Akin, and their driver, Yusuf.

“Since that moment, our lives have been suspended between hope and despair, they demanded the sum of N500m from us, how are we going to raise that” he lamented.

According to him, the victims were innocent workers contributing to the development of Kwara State and Nigeria.

“They were not criminals or adventurers. They went to work believing they would return home safely. Instead, their families have been thrown into anguish and despair,” he added.

While acknowledging the efforts of the police and other security agencies, Boyinbogun stressed that time was running out.

“Every passing hour deepens the trauma of the families, especially the wives, children and elderly parents who depend entirely on these men for survival.

“Many of these families have no other source of income. Beyond fear for their lives, there is now hunger, psychological distress and total uncertainty,” he said.

The families, including wives and children of the abducted workers, appealed to the Kwara State Government and security agencies to intensify rescue efforts and treat the abduction as a top-priority emergency.

“We are appealing to the government to come to our aid, the government needs to establish direct communication with the affected families, provide welfare support and counselling, and strengthen security along construction corridors and rural roads to prevent further attacks,” he said.

Appealing directly to the abductors, Boyinbogun said, “These men are fathers, sons and brothers. Please release them unharmed.”

One of the wives, Idayat Lade, in tears as pleaded for the release of her husband.

“Please let them release our husbands to us. We want them alive,” she cried, revealing that she had lost a baby due to the emotional trauma caused by the abduction.

Meanwhile, Kwara State Governor, AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq, has ordered the police to fish out hoodlums who attacked women protesters near the under-construction Government House in Ilorin.

A viral video obtained by The PUNCH showed suspected hoodlums assaulting women who were protesting near the Government House gate during the Christmas holiday.

In a statement on Monday, the Governor's Chief Press Secretary, Rafiu Ajakaye, said AbdulRazaq expressed outrage over the incident, describing the attack as unacceptable.

"Peaceful protest is a democratic right. The women are within their right to express their views. We distance ourselves from the incident as it does not represent our values as a government," the statement read.

The governor directed the police to identify and prosecute those responsible, adding that the government was not relenting on security.

Ajakaye noted that the governor had recently led the passing-out parade of armed forest guards tasked with flushing out kidnapers and terrorists from forests across the state, alongside increased deployment of security personnel to protect communities.

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