

Bandits kill 30 in fresh Katsina, Kwara attacks

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FILE: Bandits

| Dare Akogun and Esha Aliku

No fewer than 30 people were killed on Tuesday in separate bandits' attacks on communities in Katsina and Kwara states, as assailants renewed violent assaults on rural settlements, razing houses and vehicles and forcing residents to flee.

In Katsina State, at least 20 persons were killed when bandits attacked Doma community in Tafoki Ward, Faskari Local Government Area.

Residents said the assailants stormed the area unhindered, killing villagers and setting houses and vehicles ablaze before fleeing.

Confirming the incident, the Chairman of Faskari Local Government Area, Surajo Aliyu, described the attack as a reprisal and the deadliest in the area in recent months.

“This attack is a reprisal one, and it is a deadly one indeed because we had never had such an attack in the last five months in this area as it is today,” Aliyu said.

He added that security operatives were alerted but could not arrive in time to prevent the killings.

“Today, they killed at least 20 people. They burnt cars and houses during the dastardly attack. We reported the incident to security personnel, but unfortunately, they could not arrive before the bandits carried out their heinous act,” he said.

Aliyu disclosed that the bodies of the victims had been evacuated for burial scheduled for Wednesday morning in Tafoki.

“We sympathise with the people of Doma, Tafoki Ward, Faskari, and indeed the entire people of Katsina State, especially the bereaved families. May God bring an end to these senseless killings,” he said.

Faskari Local Government Area was among the councils that entered into a truce with bandits about five months ago, a development that had brought relative calm until the latest attack.

Efforts to get a reaction from the Katsina State Police Command were unsuccessful, as calls and messages to the Police Public Relations Officer, DSP Abubakar Sadiq, were not responded to as of the time of filing this report.

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Meanwhile, in Kwara State, at least 10 villagers were killed on Tuesday evening when bandits attacked Woro and Nuku communities in Kaiama Local Government Area.

The attackers, suspected to be operating from the Borgu National Park forest in neighbouring Niger State, reportedly invaded the communities at about 6:00 pm, firing sporadically and causing panic among residents. Several houses were also set ablaze during the attack.

A community leader, who spoke on condition of anonymity for security reasons, confirmed the casualty figure.

“The bandits invaded Woro and Nuku in large numbers. About 10 people so far have been confirmed dead, and we are still searching for others who fled into the bush during the attack. Many houses were also set ablaze,” he said.

Reacting, the Kwara State Government expressed sorrow over the killings, saying Governor Abdulrahman Abdulrazaq was personally monitoring the situation.

In a statement issued on Tuesday night, the Chief Press Secretary to the governor, Rafiu Ajakaye, described the attack as a “cowardly expression of frustration” by terrorist cells in response to ongoing security operations in the state.

“The governor condemns the attack, which he says is a cowardly expression of frustration by terrorist cells following the ongoing counter-terrorism campaigns in parts of the state and the successes so far recorded,” the statement said.

The government alleged that the timing of the attack was a deliberate attempt to divert the attention of security agencies and undermine recent gains against kidnapping gangs.

Governor Abdulrazaq extended condolences to the families of the victims and the people of Kaiama, assuring them that security agencies had been directed to intensify operations to prevent further attacks.

As of the time of filing this report, the Kwara State Police Command had yet to issue a formal statement on the incident or on the deployment of additional personnel to the affected areas.

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