

Lakurawa terrorists kill two Customs officers in Kebbi

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By Animashaun Salman

No fewer than two Customs officers were killed in the Tugar community, Bagudu Local Government Area of Kebbi State, by gunmen suspected to be members of the Lakurawa sect.

The incident, which occurred in the early hours of Wednesday, saw the officers attacked at their checkpoint in the community.

A source who spoke with our correspondent said one of the victims, a senior officer, was burnt alive after the attackers set fire to the building where he was sleeping.

He said the incident occurred at about 3am on Wednesday.

According to the source, “The gunmen attacked two checkpoints that are very close to each other.

“They shot one officer, a junior officer, while they burnt the senior officer alive.

“They came in a truck, disguised as if they were carrying animals, which caught the officers unaware.

“Two other officers with gunshot injuries are currently receiving treatment in the hospital.”

When contacted, the Public Relations Officer of the Nigeria Customs Service, Kebbi State Command, Mustapha Mubarak, said the command would issue a statement after obtaining full details of the incident.

He neither confirmed nor denied the incident, saying, “We will issue a statement once we get the full report.”

However, the spokesman for the Nigeria Police Force in Kebbi State, SP Bashir Usman, condemned the attack and said security agencies were working to apprehend the perpetrators.

He said, “The incident at Gendene is unfortunate, and security agencies have since responded appropriately.

“Efforts are ongoing to apprehend those responsible and prevent further security breaches,” he said.

Meanwhile, residents of Fanadi village in Suru Local Government Area of the state recounted how they successfully repelled an attack by suspected Lakurawa terrorists and recovered cows stolen during the raid.

The incident, which occurred late at night a few days ago, has been described by locals as a show of courage, unity, and resilience in the face of repeated security threats confronting rural communities in parts of the state.

Speaking with our correspondent on Tuesday in a telephone interview, a resident of Fanadi village and member of the local vigilante group, Sani Bawa, said the attackers stormed the outskirts of the village at about 11pm and intercepted a man, forcing him at gunpoint to identify houses where cattle were kept.

“They met one man outside the village and ordered him at gunpoint to show them houses with cows.

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“Out of fear, he took them to different homes where they untied the cattle and moved them into the bush,” he said.

Bawa explained that to avoid civilian casualties, youths and vigilante members initially restrained residents from confronting the gunmen while they were still in the village.

According to him, once the attackers moved into the forest with the animals, the villagers organised themselves, tracked them, and launched a counter-operation.

“We allowed them to move away first so innocent people would not be caught in crossfire. Later, our youths and vigilantes surrounded them in the bush and engaged them in a gun battle,” he said.

He added that the exchange of gunfire reportedly lasted from midnight until about 4am, as both sides battled in the darkness.

Despite the intensity of the clash, Bawa said no fatalities were recorded, although one youth sustained a minor leg injury.

“Only one boy was grazed by a bullet in the leg. He is receiving treatment and doing well. There was no loss of life on our side,” he stated.

The suspected terrorists eventually retreated, abandoning the stolen cattle, which were later recovered and returned to their rightful owners.

Residents, however, expressed fears that the attackers might regroup and launch another assault.

Bawa disclosed that for the past three days, since the encounter, many villagers and vigilante members had been sleeping in nearby bushes to keep watch over the community.

“We know they can come back. Two days after the clash, we saw them passing with another herd of rustled cows, though not from our village. Since then, many of us have been sleeping outside to protect the community,” he said.

While commending the administration of Governor Nasir Idris for supporting vigilante groups and security agencies in the fight against banditry, the villagers appealed to government authorities to provide them with modern weapons to strengthen local defence efforts.

“We can defend our village, but we are using local guns while they carry sophisticated weapons. Government should arm us so we can protect ourselves better,” Bawa appealed.

Communities in parts of Kebbi State and neighbouring northwestern states have continued to face attacks linked to cattle rustling, banditry, and armed groups operating across remote border communities.

In many rural areas, residents often rely on vigilante groups as first responders while awaiting security reinforcement.

Efforts to speak with the Nigeria Police Force, Kebbi State Command, were unsuccessful, as its spokesman, SP Bashir Usman, could not be reached as of the time of filing this report.

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