

Head of vigilante dies as joint security taskforce kills over 200 terrorists

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From **John Adams**, Minna

In what could be described as a major breakthrough in the war against bandits and other terrorists groups in Niger State, a Joint Security Taskforce (JST) has rounded up and killed over 200 terrorist in Babanna, a border town between Nigeria and Benin Republic in Borgu Local Government Area.

The operation began Tuesday last week by troops of the 22 Armoured Brigade, deployed at the Forward Operating Base (FOB) in Babanna.

The climax of the five days military operation codenamed ‘Operation Savanna shield’ came on Sunday when the troops dealt a blow on the terrorists, killing over 200 of them, according to local sources.

A number of arms and ammunition were recovered by the troops, including over 100 motorcycles belonging to the terrorists.

It was gathered that the Commander of the vigilante group from Babanna town, popularly referred to as Bature OC, was killed during the operation but there was no casualty on the side of the military.

A source close to Babanna town further told the Daily Sun that the operation carried out in collaboration with the security agents from Benin Republic and Nigeria’s local vigilantes, covered Dekara Road through Gidan Zana and Rafin Korama inside Kainji Lake National Park forest.

“The operation is still ongoing as I speak with you and security agents have continued to sustain pressure on these criminal elements within the areas that I mentioned.”

A resident of the area, Alhaji Mohammed Usman, described the killing of the terrorists as a big relief for the people whose lifestyles have been changed by the terrorists.

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“For the past one year now, we cannot go to the farm, we can’t access our market and nobody travels free in this entire area for fear of being abducted or even killed. They have made life very miserable for our people,” he lamented.

Worried by the relentless bloody attacks by bandits and other terrorist groups in the areas, Borgu Kingdom had, earlier this year, appealed to the Federal Government to urgently deploy security agents to the troubled communities in Agwara and Borgu local government areas of the state.

They specifically urged the Federal Government as a matter of urgency, to establish a military base in the area to curtail the onslaught by the gunmen, saying that the current security situation in the area was not only worrisome but scary.

Community leaders said the entire Borgu Kingdom, comprising Borgu and Agwara local government areas is under siege from bandits and other hoodlums that have made lives miserable for the people in the beginning of the year

Speaking on behalf of the communities, Chairman of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Niger State, who is also the Catholic Bishop of Kontagora Diocese, Most Rev. Bulus Dauwa Yohanna, pointed out that the plight of the affected communities is better imagined than experienced as the people now live like refugees in their own communities.

He described the security situation as dire, highlighting repeated attacks on residents, schools and police facilities, adding that many children could no longer attend school, farmers have been forced to abandon their farms and markets are closed.

“The people of Agwara deserve to live without fear, our children deserve a secured future, our people need to farm their lands and sleep peacefully in their homes, but all these are no more,” he said.

Although the criminals have been operating and terrorising the areas for a long time now, the situation escalated with the abduction of the students of Papiri Missionary School in Agwara in November last year, and ever since then, the entire Borgu kingdom lost its peace.