

Over 30 kidnapped in Kogi, one killed in early morning attack

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•Two killed as soldiers, masqueraders clash in Ebiraland

From Emmanuel Adeyemi, Lokoja

Ayegunle Bunu community in Kabba-Bunu Local Government Area of Kogi State was reportedly thrown into panic in the early hours of Sunday, June 1, 2026, following a bandit attack that left one person dead and more than 30 others abducted.

Preliminary reports indicated that the attack occurred around 2:25 a.m. One person was reportedly killed during the incident, while another sustained injuries.

Sources further disclosed that two residents of Ayegunle Bunu — a man and a woman — were among those abducted.

The remaining victims were reportedly passengers travelling in a commercial bus intercepted by the attackers while passing through the area.

As of the time of filing this report, security agencies had not released an official statement regarding the incident, while efforts were ongoing to ascertain the exact number of victims and other details surrounding the attack.

Meanwhile, two persons were confirmed dead following a violent clash between soldiers and participants in the ongoing Echane Masquerade Festival in Ogaminana, headquarters of Adavi Local Government Area of the state, on Sunday.

It was gathered that the incident began when two soldiers, reportedly dressed in mufti, were allegedly assaulted by masqueraders taking part in the festival procession.

According to sources, the affected soldiers later mobilised their colleagues and returned to the area.

“Two soldiers who were not in uniform were beaten by masqueraders. They went back and mobilised their colleagues. On their return, they started shooting sporadically, which led to chaos. Residents also responded by pelting stones at the soldiers,” a witness said.

The situation quickly escalated as the soldiers allegedly opened fire in different directions, resulting in deaths and injuries.

One of the victims was identified as a Point of Sale (POS) operator, Omeiza, who was reportedly inside his kiosk when he was struck by a stray bullet. He was later confirmed dead.

Another victim reportedly sustained gunshot wounds while sitting inside his residence and died shortly after being rushed to hospital.

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Another witness alleged that the conflict began when some off-duty soldiers who had returned home for the festival reacted after reports that their colleagues had been beaten by masqueraders in Inorere, Ogaminana.

According to the source, efforts by the Adavi Peace Committee and the local cultural union to de-escalate tensions and appease the aggrieved soldiers proved unsuccessful.

“Despite immediate intervention by community leaders and stakeholders, all mediation efforts failed. The soldiers allegedly called for reinforcements from their operational base in Okene. Upon arrival, the responding troops began firing sporadically into the air,” the eyewitness stated.

The source added that the indiscriminate shooting resulted in fatal casualties among innocent bystanders and left several others injured.

Concerned residents called on the Kogi State Government and security authorities to urgently investigate the incident and prevent further escalation of violence in the area.

Efforts to obtain an official response from the Kogi State Police Command were unsuccessful as of the time of filing this report, as the Police Public Relations Officer, ASP Afusat Oyiza Saliu, neither responded to calls nor replied to text messages.

However, the Kogi State Government announced the immediate suspension of the ongoing Echane Festival across Ebiraland over security concerns.

In a statement issued by the Commissioner for Information and Communications, Kingsley Femi Fanwo, the government said credible intelligence reports indicated that activities associated with the festival could threaten public peace, safety and security.

While acknowledging the cultural and historical significance of traditional festivals in preserving heritage and identity, the government stressed that protection of lives and property remained its foremost responsibility.

According to the statement, Governor Ahmed Usman Ododo directed the immediate suspension of the festival in the interest of maintaining peace and public safety across affected communities.

The governor also directed all security agencies in the state to ensure strict compliance with the order, warning that individuals or groups found organising, participating in or promoting activities related to the suspended festival would face sanctions in accordance with the law.

The government appealed to traditional rulers, community leaders, youth groups and residents to cooperate with security agencies and support efforts aimed at sustaining peace and stability.

Reaffirming its commitment to the security and well-being of citizens, the government said it would continue to take proactive measures to preserve peace and harmony across the state.
