

Bandits Kill About 170 Villagers, Burn Houses In Attack On Kwara Communities



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Bandits

- **It's a cowardly attack on civilians, says Governor AbdulRazaq**

Two communities, Woro and Nuku, in the Kaiama Local Government Area of Kwara State on Tuesday evening came under heavy bandit attack. It was learnt that many families lost their loved ones in the violent attack, while several houses were reportedly burnt by the hoodlums.

By the time the attack ended, at least 170 people lay dead, as confirmed by a lawmaker representing the communities, who spoke with Reuters, a foreign news agency yesterday, as authorities and soldiers continued to comb nearby bushes for survivors.

The state government, in a statement by the Chief Press Secretary (CPS) to the Governor, Rafiu Ajakaye, confirmed the development. A community leader in the area confirmed that about 10 people were killed and many houses burnt.



It was the deadliest assault recorded this year in the district bordering Niger State, an area increasingly targeted attack by gunmen who raid villages, kidnap residents and loot livestock.

Mohammed Omar Bio, a member of parliament representing the area, told The Associated Press that the attacks were carried out by the Lakurawa, an armed group affiliated with the Islamic State group. Villagers fled into surrounding bushes as the gunmen attacked the village of Woro, another lawmaker, Saidu Baba Ahmed, told Reuters on phone.

Ahmed said the gunmen rounded up residents, bound their hands behind their backs and executed them. The lawmaker shared photographs of dead bodies with Reuters, which the agency was not immediately able to verify. "As I'm speaking to you now, I'm in the village along with military personnel, sorting dead bodies and combing the surrounding areas for more," Ahmed said.

Residents told Reuters the gunmen demanded during a sermon that locals ditch their allegiance to the Nigerian state and switch to Sharia Islamic law. When the villagers pushed back, the militants opened fire. Kwara police spokesperson Adetoun Ejire-Adeyemi said the police and military have been mobilised to the area for a search-and-rescue operation, but declined to provide casualty details.

Ayodeji Emmanuel Babaomo, the Red Cross secretary in Kwara state, told The Associated Press that hundreds of men attacked the village and scores were killed, but they did not have exact numbers because of the area's remoteness.

Meanwhile, the statement by the CPS to Governor AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq mourned victims of the Kaiama attack, noting that security forces had continued to improve on counterterrorism operations. "Kwara State Governor AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq is saddened by the cowardly attack on civilians in Woro and Nuku communities of Kaiama Local Government Area.

"The Governor condemns the attack, which he says is a cowardly expression of frustration by terrorist cells following the ongoing counterterrorism campaigns in parts of the state and the successes so far recorded."