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New Year Bloodshed In Niger state: 42 killed in deadly terror attacks



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Minna — Bandits have again stormed a community in Niger State during which no fewer than 42 persons, including children were said to have been killed while scores were also said to have been abducted.

The incident, which occurred in Agwara and Borgu Local Government Areas of the state, came less than one month after over 300 pupils, students and staff of St. Mary's Catholic School, Papiri, were abducted in the same local government areas.

This came as President Bola Tinubu directed the Minister of Defence, the Chief of Defence Staff, the Service Chiefs, the Inspector-General of Police, and the Director-General of the Department of State Services, DSS, to track down and apprehend the perpetrators of the attack, and ensure they are swiftly brought to justice.

Also, Governor Mohammed Bago of Niger State has expressed sadness over the terrorist attack, describing it as cruel and nefarious.

Meanwhile, former Vice President Atiku Abubakar has condemned the attack, describing the killings and abductions as a grave failure of the state's fundamental responsibility to protect its citizens.

Vanguard gathered that the bandits had been on rampage in some communities in the same local areas in the past few days unleashing terror on the innocent villagers unchallenged.

A dependable source from the area told Vanguard that no fewer than 37 people were killed by the rampaging terrorists in Kasuwa Daji near Papiri while another five were gunned down in Kaima village.

“Apart from those who were killed, scores of people were also abducted.

“Infact, some of the people abducted included pupils and students of the same St. Mary's Private Catholic Primary and Secondary schools, Papiri in Agwarra, who were abducted recently but eventually released a few weeks ago.

“On Saturday, the suspected bandits came and wreaked havoc in the villages and later burnt down a popular market in the area before abducting an unspecified number of people including children,” the source disclosed.

Director of Communications, Catholic Church of Kontagora Diocese, Rev. Father Stephen Kabirat, while confirming the incident said no fewer than 40 persons were killed apart from those taken into captivity.

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“Infact, our Parish Priest narrowly escaped abduction when the terrorists visited our Mission House three days ago. They succeeded in destroying some religious items in the church, carting away two motorbikes and cash.

“They were looking for the Priest but luckily he escaped but they abducted some villagers, including children,” he added.

The Niger State Police Command, while confirming the latest attack through its Spokesman, Wasiu Abiodun said about 30 people were killed during the attack.

“About 9p.m., on Saturday, the command received reports that suspected bandits attacked and killed over 30 persons and abducted an unconfirmed number of persons.

“About 4:30p.m., on Saturday, suspected bandits from the National Park Forest along Kabe District invaded Kasuwan Daji located at Demo Village via Kabe, killed over 30 persons, burnt the market and looted shops and carted away food item,” the police remarked.

He, however, said that a joint security team had visited the scene and efforts were ongoing to rescue the victims.

Tinubu orders security agencies to hunt down perpetrators

The President has directed security agencies to rescue all the abducted victims urgently.

President Tinubu gave the directive yesterday, in response to Saturday’s killings of villagers in Niger State by terrorists suspected to be fleeing from Sokoto and Zamfara following the United States’ air strike on Christmas Eve.

He condemned the attack on the Kasuwan Daji Community and the abduction of women and children.

The President sent his heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims, as well as to the Government and people of Niger State.

President Tinubu, in a statement by his spokesman, Bayo Onanuga, said: “These terrorists have tested the resolve of our country and its people. They must, therefore, face the full consequences of their criminal actions. No matter who they are or what their intent is, they must be hunted down. They, and all those who aid, abet, or enable them in any form, will be caught and brought to justice.” The President assured the people of Niger State that security agencies have been mandated to intensify operations around vulnerable communities, particularly those near the forests that have served as hideouts for criminal elements.

He urged Nigerians to remain united and resolute in the face of this tragedy and cautioned against divisive rhetoric that could undermine national security and cohesion during this challenging period.

“These times demand our humanity. We must stand together as one people and confront these monsters in unison. United, we can and must defeat them, deny them any sanctuary. We must reclaim the peace and security of these attacked communities,” President Tinubu said.

Gov Bago expresses sadness over attack on communities

Governor Bago, through his Chief Press Secretary, Bologi Ibrahim, described the terrorist attack that led to the death of many people, the kidnapping of several others, and the destruction of livelihoods, as horrendous.

He extended his deepest sympathy to the people of the affected communities, especially the victims and their families.

He said: **“The victims of the attack at the Kasuwan Daji, Market, Sukumbara Village, are both Muslims and Christians drawn from different communities in Borgu local government area of the state**

“It is disturbing and worrying to start the year with such unfortunate incidents and I urge the people to remain resolute in God because my administration is collaborating with the Federal Government and security agencies to improve the security of the affected areas.” He said a joint security team was trailing the terrorists with the view to rescuing the kidnapped victims just as he prayed that God will repose the souls of the departed, rescue the kidnapped victims, and grant healing to the injured as well as restore livelihoods that were destroyed.

Niger attacks expose failure of state to protect citizens — Atiku

Atiku in a statement, yesterday, expressed deep sadness over the attacks, which led to the loss of scores of innocent lives and the abduction of several residents, including schoolchildren.

He said: **“I am deeply saddened by the heinous attacks on communities in Agwarra and Borgu Local Government Areas of Niger State, which have resulted in the loss of scores of innocent lives and the abduction of several residents, including schoolchildren.**

“This brazen display of brutality against defenceless communities is unacceptable and profoundly disturbing.

“I extend my heartfelt condolences to the families who have lost loved ones and stand in solidarity with the people and government of Niger State at this painful time. “My thoughts and prayers are with the families of the deceased and those abducted, particularly the children. I urge the relevant authorities to act swiftly to ensure their safe and unconditional release.

“The primary duty of any government is the protection of lives and property. We must urgently strengthen our security architecture, restore confidence in affected communities, and ensure that the perpetrators of these heinous crimes are

communities, and ensure that the perpetrators of these heinous crimes are brought to justice," added.

Northern govs condemn attack

Also, the Northern States Governors Forum, NSGF, has deplored in the strongest terms, the terrorist attack in Niger State, describing it as a cruel assault on innocent citizens and a grave threat to peace and livelihoods.

In a statement on behalf of his colleagues, the Chairman of the Forum and Governor of Gombe State, Muhammadu Yahaya, expressed shock and outrage over the incident, noting that it had inflicted untold grief on families, disrupted economic activities and unsettled otherwise peaceful communities.

Yahaya noted that such senseless acts of terror targeting market women, traders and citizens going about their lawful activities, are morally reprehensible and strike at the very heart of communal harmony and regional economic life. The NSGF Chairman condemned the perpetrators in unequivocal terms, calling on security agencies to intensify efforts to track down and apprehend those responsible and ensure they face justice.

Inuwa extended the forum's deepest condolences to the families of the victims, the government and people of Niger State, and all affected communities, while praying for the repose of the souls of the deceased, strength for the bereaved, and the swift rescue of those abducted.

The governor assured of the forum's continued collaboration with federal and security agencies to strengthen security architecture and safeguard lives and livelihoods across the North.

Abiodun commiserates with Bago, demands justice for victims

Similarly, Governor Dapo Abiodun of Ogun State and Chairman of the Southern Governors' Forum, condemned the killing, describing the attack as callous, senseless, and a crime against humanity.

In a statement, yesterday, in Abeokuta, Governor Abiodun expressed heartfelt condolences to Governor Bago, as well as the government and people of the state, over what he described as a tragic and deeply disturbing incident.

He said: "On behalf of the government and people of Ogun State and my colleagues in the Southern Governors' Forum, I commiserate with the Government and people of Niger State over the dastardly attacks by terrorists that left 42 people dead and many others abducted.

"I urge Governor Bago, not to allow this terrible incident to dampen his morale and determination to safeguard lives and property in Niger State."

Governor Abiodun described the assault on innocent citizens as a stain on the nation's conscience, stressing that such barbaric acts must never be allowed to recur.

“The cowardly onslaught on innocent citizens going about their lawful business represents a blight on our country. It is a horrendous incident that must never be allowed to happen again,” he said.

He prayed for the repose of the souls of the victims and for divine strength for their families to bear the loss. “I commiserate with the families who have lost their loved ones and pray that Almighty God grants them the fortitude to survive this terrible ordeal,” Abiodun added.

Calling for decisive action, the governor urged security agencies to deploy all available resources to ensure that those responsible are brought to justice.

“I call on the security agencies to track and hunt down the perpetrators of these attacks and ensure that they never get another opportunity to slaughter innocent citizens. The perpetrators must be completely crushed with all the resources available to the Nigerian State. May the souls of the victims rest in peace.”

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