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# ZAMFARA GOV BLAMES POLICE OVER MASSACRE

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IGP, Mohammed Dahiru Abubakar

Acting governor of Zamfara State Ibrahim Wakkala Muhammad yesterday said the deadly pre-dawn attack on Kizara village on Tuesday was caused by negligence on the part of the security agents. Muhammad spoke while on a house-to-house condolence visit to the people of Kizara, who lost at least 48 people in the incident that was blamed

on armed robbers.

He questioned why security agents stationed in the area were redeployed just two days to the attack, which he described as barbaric, callous and inhuman.

In Tuesday's Kizara violence, dozens of gunmen riding motorbikes laid siege on the village, firing indiscriminately for about five hours. They went house-to-house, shooting men dead, saying they were looking for vigilante men who had been threatening them. Some of the gunmen also climbed a nearby hill and shot fleeing residents as well as people coming from neighbouring villages to offer support.

Among the 48 people killed were the village head, the chief imam, his deputy and leader of the vigilante group. The gunmen set fire to many houses and shops before they fled the village around 9 am.

The attack happened just two days after police personnel stationed in the area were redeployed.

"All those involved must be fished out and brought to book, and I am assuring you that no stone would be left unturned in ensuring justice and we will succeed in sha Allah," acting governor Muhammad told the grieving Kizara residents.

He directed the state emergency management agency to assess the level of damages done to the community in order to provide assistance immediately.

Also yesterday, Inspector General of Police Mohammed Abubakar flew into the village by helicopter, along with Minister of State for Works Bashir Yuguda and assistant inspector general of police in charge of Zone 10 Mamman Sule.

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Abubakar said he was there to commiserate with the people. "President Goodluck Jonathan has sent his condolence message to the people of Zamfara State because he was deeply shocked by the incident and we hope that this would be the last," he said.

Senator representing Zamfara Central, Allhaji Kabir Garba Marafa, for his part, said he would present a motion in the Senate to invite the Inspector General of Police to explain why security agents pulled out of the area just two days to the attack.

Meanwhile residents of Kizara and neighbouring areas who fled the violence said they would not return until adequate security is provided. Daily Trust learnt that many families have fled the largely agrarian area, abandoning their farms as the cropping season approaches its climax.

A resident Dauda Nasir said he would never return home even though he had a farm in which he had invested lots of resources.

Another resident who was seen on a motorbike along with his wife and children said he was heading to Magami town to take refuge and would only return when safety of lives and property is guaranteed.

Meanwhile, secretary general of the Zamfara chapter of Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association, Alhaji Sani Dahiru Kaura, has said he sent a team to verify allegations of so-called reprisal attacks on nearby Fulani settlements in the wake of the Kizara violence.

"We heard that some Fulani houses are being burnt and we cannot verify it that it is why we have decided to send this team to go and find out and we have told them to first of all meet the stakeholders like the emir of Tsafe, divisional police officer and even the council chairman before proceeding to the areas reported to have been affected," he said.

Reacting, state Police Public Relations Officer DSP Lawal Abdullahi said there were no attacks on Fulani settlements as was being rumoured yesterday.

"We have not heard of anything like that because our men are there and I do not think that there will be any break down of law and order there," he said.

Deadliest yet

The Kizara violence was the deadliest in the series of bandit attacks on villages in Zamfara State over the past two years. In most of the attacks, it was believed that the gunmen were trying to exact revenge from vigilantes who had previously arrested armed robbers terrorizing local traders.

In November last year, 20 people were shot dead in Kabaro town. A month earlier, 27 were killed in Dangulbi, while in Birnin Magaji 15 were killed in February 2012. These were preceded by the August 2011 attack in which 19 died at Lingyado town.

Similar attacks have also happened in neighboring Kaduna and Katsina states. Just days ago, bandits attacked Kwasa-Kwasa in Kaduna State, killing two military personnel and four other people. Before this, 20 people were killed in Dogon Dawa in October 2012; 3 policemen died in Birnin Gwari in the same month; and seven people were killed in Goron Dutse earlier this month, all in Kaduna State.

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