

Protesters take corpses to Govt House, emir's palace

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Protesting youths from Batsari look at 18 corpses of people killed by armed bandits in their area, when their remains were conveyed to Katsina state government house and the Emir of Katsina's Palace yesterday

Angry youths from Batsari Local Government Area of Katsina State yesterday stormed the Government House and the palace of the Emir of Katsina with the corpses of 18 victims of bandit attack.

There were also reported attacks by bandits in three other local governments of Jibia, Danmusa, and Faskari in the state.

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The protesters, who were many in number, rode on motorcycles and five vehicles, accused the security agents deployed to their communities of failure to protect them. They said the vigilantes in the area, also known as civilian JTF “are performing far better than the conventional security men in the area.”

Daily Trust reports that trouble started in Yar Gamji village of Batsari LG when many bandits riding on motorcycles killed some farmers early Tuesday morning as they cleared their farms in preparation for farming activities after a midnight rainfall.

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“As they were working on their farms, the bandits suddenly appeared and opened fire on them, killing them instantly,” a source told *Daily Trust*, adding that the “bandits later rode into the village shooting sporadically, attacking unsuspecting residents injuring many in the process.”

The residents said they called for help but no security personnel came to their aid in time.

Few minutes later, a police van arrived at the village, evacuated the corpses and brought them to the palace of the District Head of Ruma. This angered the youth in the area, who went on a violent protest.

The rampaging youth later mobilised and headed to the council’s Divisional Police Headquarters, but were pushed back by the policemen. Three members of the mob were reportedly shot in the process.

This further infuriated the youth and they decided to take the corpses to the state capital to continue with their protest.

Speaking at the Government House besides the corpses, the spokesman of the protesters Aminu Rumah said their action was to draw attention to the ongoing killings and maiming in their localities and to demand for proper security protection against bandits.

He said farming activities have crumbled in the area as people are scared to visit farms.

“We value our civilian JTF, they perform better than the security men in our areas, they don’t come when we need them the most, we are virtually on our own,” he said

“Even today during our protest, the police shot three of us, they are being attended at hospital,” he added

Governor Aminu Bello Masari said his administration is greatly concerned over the incessant activities of bandits.

He however called for calm, assuring the protesters that the government is working round the clock to address the situation.

He said peaceful protest is acceptable but some miscreants may take advantage to cause mischief.

According to him, his recent appointment as the chair of the security committee of the Northern governors is another step taken to see that banditry

is checked accordingly.

“We are evolving viable ways to meet the president to address it squarely,” he said.

Earlier at the palace, the emir Abdulmumini Kabir Usman expressed shock over the incidence and prayed for the repose of the soul of the deceased.

The police spokesman SP Gambo Isah in a statement yesterday said “This morning at about 10:00hrs, while our Teams were responding to distress calls at Dan Musa and Faskari, bandits in their numbers seized the opportunity and attacked farmers from Yar Gamji village, Batsari LGA of Katsina State in their farm lands and killed 18 of them.”

“Before the arrival of the police, Army and Air force the attackers escaped into Rugu forest. The villagers were angry and staged a protest while some bad elements among them went on rampage and wanted to attack Batsari Division.

“Everything is brought under control as normalcy has returned to the area. The Commissioner of police, Katsina Command, CP Sanusi Buba, PSC, has already deployed reinforcements of police patrol teams to the area,” he said.

He called on members of the public to always have confidence in the security agencies and partner with them in the battle against this insurgency.

It was learnt that the attacks in Jibia, Dan Musa and Faskari led to the killing of many persons.

Five persons were reportedly killed at Mara Zamfarawa village (Dan Musa) while many animals were rustled. Locals say the bandits attacked farmers working on farmlands. In Sabon Layin Galadima (Faskari), residents put the number of death at 11.

However, SP Gambo Isah said what happened was that Yan Sakai (vigilantes) went into the forest to confront the bandits and did not return.

“Two corpses were recovered and buried by the villagers yesterday. A search party led by the DPO recovered three others inside the forest. A bandit camp was also discovered abandoned by the bandits and investigation is on-going,” he said.

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