

# 9 killed in Kaduna, C'River, Delta in 2 days

From Aliyu Babankarfi (Zaria), Mohammed Ibrahim Yaba (Kaduna), Eyo Charles (Calabar) & Victor Sorokwu (Asaba)

**N**ow fewer than nine persons have been killed in different communities in Kaduna, Cross River and Delta states in the past two days, Daily Trust reports.

The killings were carried out by suspected gunmen, bandits and cultists while others were abducted in the process.

Four of the killings, which were reported in Kaduna State, took place at Zaria, Sabon Birni community as well as along the Birnin Gwari highway.

Gunmen in the early hours of Sunday stormed Kuregu in Wusasa area of Zaria in Kaduna State where they killed a civilian and a soldier before abducting at least six persons, Daily Trust gathered.

The incident occurred a week after gunmen invaded the home of Professor Aliyu Muhammad, a lecturer with Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University (ATBU), Bauchi, killed his son Abdulaziz Aliyu and then abducted the don. Prof Aliyu, who is Head of the Department of Agricultural Protection at ATBU is yet to be released by his abductors.

Residents of Kuregu in Wusasa told our correspondent on Monday that the gunmen had engaged security agents in a shoot-out which led to the killing of a soldier, adding that the gunmen also set ablaze a military vehicle during the attack.

Residents claimed those abducted included a vigilante leader in Kufena named Sani Jan Fenti and five others.

When contacted, the spokesman for the Depot Nigerian Army, Zaria, Captain Audi Arigu, and that of

Basawa, Lieutenant Godiya Audu, said they had not been briefed on the incident.

Police Public Relations Officer in Kaduna, ASP Mohammed Jalige, when contacted promised to verify and call back but did not at press time.

In Kaduna, suspected armed bandits on Sunday killed an eight months pregnant health worker along the Kaduna-Birnin Gwari highway. The deceased was killed while travelling to Kaduna from Birnin Gwari at a place called Zankoro before Unguwar Yako on Sunday.

It was gathered that the bandits opened fire on the commercial vehicle around noon to force it to stop.

A cousin of the deceased, Aliyu Mahmud, who confirmed the incident to Daily Trust via phone identified the victim as Aisha Yusuf, describing her as a dedicated volunteer health worker in Birnin Gwari community.

"She was eight months pregnant but very hardworking and dedicated to her work at the PHC where she works in Birnin Gwari. The people in this community liked her a lot because of her commitment to work even though she is a volunteer worker," he said.

Kaduna State Commissioner for Internal Security and Home Affairs, Samuel Aruwan, confirmed the killing in a statement issued on Monday, saying Governor Nasir el-Rufai had condoled Malam Musa Adamu, the husband of the deceased.

Similarly, suspected gunmen on Sunday killed a commercial driver identified as Abubakar popularly called Baba Abu at Sabon Birni community of Kaduna State.

The incident happened around 5 pm while the deceased was conveying passengers along that route.

Daily Trust gathered that the young driver died on the spot when the gunmen opened fire on his vehicle while his passengers were abducted.

A friend of the late driver who identified himself as Umar, described the deceased as very friendly, saying his corpse was left at the roadside alongside the vehicle.

"We tried his phone line when the news came that he was attacked. The gunmen picked it and said he was kidnapped but it was later confirmed that he was killed after they (gunmen) opened fire on his car," he said.

Kaduna State Police Command Public Relations Officer (PPRO) did not pick his calls.

In Cross River State three persons whose identities were not immediately known were reportedly beheaded on Sunday afternoon by suspected cultists who invaded Ikot Ene and surrounding villages in Akpabuyo LGA of Cross River State.

A top government official who lives in one of the villages but preferred anonymity said: "The entire surrounding villages of Ikot Ene were invaded by these armed boys we suspect to be cultists."

"They beheaded the sons of a village head in broad daylight. They also killed another man."

Another villager, Andem Cobham, also told journalists that the invaders damaged houses and many cars.

He said when the state security outfit, Operation Apakwu arrived, the boys melted into the creeks and bushes and resurfaced once the team returned to Calabar.

The coordinator of Operation Apakwu which comprises military and policemen, Dr. Alfred Mboto, said they have contained the situation and that a detachment of the outfit

would intensify surveillance in the communities.

Similarly, the police in Delta State have confirmed the killing of a policeman and a soldier by gunmen at a military checkpoint at Oton area of Sapele Sunday night.

The deceased was said to have been gunned down when armed bandits attacked the military post through the community river in speedboats.

Also, an uncertain number of people are feared dead and property destroyed as members of an Eastern security network set up by the outlawed Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB) clashed with a combined team of police and soldiers in Orlu, Imo State.

The crisis had been brewing since last week after a clash between ESN volunteers and police resulted in deaths.

Witnesses reported sporadic shooting and residents taking cover to avoid stray bullets. The shooting was heard as far as the neighbouring communities of Okporo, Akata and Umutanze.

The soldiers were said to be drawn from the 34 Artillery Brigade in Obinze.

Our correspondent said there was panic in Orlu, where many residents have already fled while military checkpoints were erected on roads and travellers advised to avoid using Orlu road or even move about at night.

One witness said he counted 16 low-flying aircraft over the town.

The group had released a video, which went viral last week, showing ESN volunteers boasting how they dislodged security men who attacked them and displayed the vehicles the policemen had abandoned.