

# Bandits Kill Over 20 Vigilantes In Niger



By Farouk Shuaibu

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## **Bandits have killed more than 20 vigilantes in an attack on Kotonkoro in Mariga Local Government Area of Niger State.**

The attack, according to BBC Hausa, occurred on Monday after the vigilantes engaged a group of bandits in the area.

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Ibrahim Ilyasu, a member of State House of Assembly from Mariga, said: “On Monday, there was a clash between vigilantes and bandits and they pursued them to a nearby bush to fight them. Unfortunately, the vigilantes were killed and the bandits refused to allow the community to retrieve the bodies.

“I can’t say the actual number of people killed because they refused to grant access to pick the bodies, but today (Wednesday), soldiers went to the forest to collect bodies of 16 persons. But that’s not all of them because there are still more people they couldn’t identify as their bodies were dismembered.”

The lawmaker said four bodies had been recovered earlier.

Asked how the attack happened despite the vigilantes working hand-in-hand with other security agencies, Ilyasu said: “I can’t explain it too since I was not there, but this happened. Those living in the community can testify because the bandits chased those who earlier went for the bodies back, they (bandits) almost entered Kotonkoro.

“There has been respite in bandit activities in the state and we are surprised by the new wave of attacks. They’re coming through the border with Kebbi State as it also borders Zamfara.

“The way out is to intensify prayers as the situation is befuddling as they don’t understand why the community is being targeted. The vigilantes are trying their best together with the soldiers stationed in the community because sometimes, they do overpower the bandits.”

Daily Trust reports that Governor Abubakar Sani Bello had, a fortnight ago, promised to arm vigilante groups in Niger State, with pump-action guns, to enable them confront bandits and address other security threats.

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