

# How bandits killed dozens in Sokoto market

From Abubakar Auwal (Sokoto), Muideen Olaniyi & Dalhatu Liman (Abuja)

The killing of dozens of people at Goronyo market in the eastern part of Sokoto State Sunday night was launched by different bandits' groups that worked as a team, witnesses told the *Daily Trust* yesterday.

They said the assailants shelled their difference, came together and stormed the weekly Goronyo market shooting sporadically.

The locals said the market was filled to the brim when the terrorists, riding on over 100 motorcycles, surrounded the place and opened fire on buyers and sellers that led to the death of 49 people.

The Sunday attack was the latest siege in Goronyo Local Government Area, which had witnessed countless attacks occasioned by killings and displacement of people.

With the Goronyo onslaught, over 65 people have been killed in the last 10 days on that axis, locals said.

At least 22 traders were killed in a similar attack at Unguwan Lalle market in Sabon Birni Local government Area on October 8, *Daily Trust* reports.

Governor Aminu Waziri Tambuwal confirmed the Goronyo market attack on Monday when he hosted the Chief of Army Staff, Lt.-Gen. Faruk Yahaya, at the Sokoto Government House.

He said '30 something' people have been confirmed killed at the Goronyo market and details were still being put together.

The governor later said the number rose to 43.

## 'It was a joint criminal operation'

Like what happened at Unguwan Lalle, some residents attributed the attack on Goronyo market to the activities of 'Yan Sakai' (outlawed vigilantes) in the area that have been killing herders to avenge attacks on their communities.

One of the sources said, "The recent attack could be a misplaced reprisal by 'Yan Sakai' because of the recent killing of 11 herders at Mamande market in Gwadabawa Local



■ Sokoto State governor, Aminu Waziri Tambuwal (left) when he received the Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Lt Gen. Faruk Yahaya at the Government House Sokoto, yesterday

Government Area.

"This outlawed group is arresting and killing Fulani men unjustifiably," he said.

Another source, who gave his name as Salihu, said the attackers stormed the village market from the neighbouring Gundumi forest which is few kilometres away.

"I believe it was a joint attack by bandits from different groups because of the way it was perpetrated. One group cannot carry out such attack; it must have been carried out by groups of bandits in the area."

Farmer Ismail, who was in Goronyo when the attack was launched, said the attackers wore vigilantes' uniforms.

"They dressed like our local vigilantes, concealed their weapons inside their clothes and positioned themselves in strategic places before starting shooting at the traders and buyers," he said.

Some buyers also said the lack of telecommunication facilities made it difficult for them to call for help.

"The heavily armed attackers came around 4.30 pm and held sway for many hours without any resistance. They rode on over 100 motorcycles and they could be as many as 150 or more. We could not call for help because there was no GSM network," one of them said. A different source said that mobile

police and local vigilantes attempted to confront the rampaging gunmen but were overpowered.

Traders from Sokoto and neighbouring states as well as the Niger Republic patronise the Goronyo market every Sunday.

Chairman of Goronyo LGA, Abdulwahab Yahaya, said apart from those killed, 16 traders were injured by the attackers and were taken to the hospital for treatment.

According to him, "Eight of the traders killed were from Goronyo while the remaining ones came from the neighbouring villages."

He also corroborated that it could be a reprisal because of how Fulani men were killed by Yan Sakai in the area.

"The situation is calm now and nobody is displaced in the area," he said.

Goronyo, Isa, Sabon Birni, Raba and others are the frontline of banditry in Sokoto and hundreds of people have

been killed with many of the incidences not reported by the media.

## Military operations in Zamfara forced bandits to Sokoto - Tambuwal

Governor Tambuwal while hosting the Chief of Army Staff, General Yahaya, who is an indigene of the state, expressed shock over the Goronyo attack.

"We are greeted this morning with dastardly attack and scores lost their lives. We are still counting," he said.

He said the spate of attacks by bandits in the eastern part of Sokoto State could be attributed to the ongoing military operation in Zamfara State.

"It was not like this before. If you chase them away from Zamfara they run into other states. This is why there are attacks in Katsina, Kebbi, Niger, Kaduna and Sokoto States.

"The operation should have taken place in all the distressed states simultaneously. We need

more presence of military personnel and more logistics in the state. We will continue to pray for you, Mr President and the armed forces to succeed over these criminals," he said.

Also, the Sultan of Sokoto, Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar said that the current security challenges in the country are surmountable.

Speaking while receiving the chief of army staff in his palace, the monarch said they have confidence in the army.

"We know the magnitude of the challenge but we have confidence in you. We assure the military of our total commitment and support," he said.

On his part, General Yahaya said they were in Sokoto to interact with troops, have first-hand information about their operations and appreciate them.

"We succeeded in killing and arresting many of them and we are surprised to see some of the people involved," the army chief said, though short of mentioning any name.

## Buhari vows to end banditry

In his condolence message, President Muhammadu Buhari in a statement issued by his media aide, Garba Shehu, said the days of the bandits were numbered because the military capabilities of our forces were being boosted by the acquisition and deployment of advanced equipment.

He appealed to all Nigerians "not to despair because this administration is determined more than ever before to protect Nigerians from murderous criminal gangs that have no respect for the sanctity human of life."

"The bandits are living in the fool's paradise of invincibility, but reality will soon dawn on them harder than ever before," he said.

## NGE to hold conference on security

By Faruk Shuaibu

The Nigerian Guild of Editors says its 17th All Nigeria Editors' Conference will hold from Thursday to Friday, this week.

A statement yesterday by its President, Mustapha Isah and the General Secretary, Iyobosa Uwugiaren, said the conference with the theme 'Media in Times of Crises: Resolving Conflict, Achieving Consensus', would bring together editors and media owners across Nigeria as well as their foreign colleagues to discuss the security challenges in the country and proffer solutions.

The event, sponsored by Central Bank of Nigeria, the United Bank for Africa, Glo, Zenith Bank, Access Bank, Air Peace and TrustFund Pensions Limited, would hold in Abuja. Other promoters are the Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation, the Federal Inland Revenue

Service and the Yobe State Government.

President, Newspaper Proprietors' Association of Nigeria, Kabiru Yusuf; Publisher, Premium Times, Dapo Olorunoyi; the Minister of Works, Babatunde Fashola; the Group Managing Director, Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, Mele Kyari; the Chief of Defence Staff, Gen. Lucky Irabor and other security chiefs were scheduled to lead discussions at the conference.

State governors with security challenges, including Ifeanyi Okowa (Delta), Nasiru El-Rufai (Kaduna), Yaya Bello (Kogi), Seyi Mankide, Bello Matawalle (Zamfara), Babagana Zulum (Borno) and David Nweze Umahi (Ebonyi) were also expected to be part of the conversation.

Also expected at the event are Governors Oluwarotimi Odunayo Akeredolu (Ondo),

Adegboyega Oyetola (Osun) and others.

Olorunoyi will give the keynote address that would be discussed by security chiefs, including the National Security Adviser, Babagana Monguno; Irabor; Director-General, Department of State Services, Yusuf Bichi and the Inspector-General of Police, Usman Baba.

"Kyari will be the Special Guest of Honour; while Kabiru Yusuf will be the Guest of Honour."

A doyen of the media, Ray Ekpu, will chair the opening session with Fashola and others, including President, Nigeria Union of Journalists, Chris Isiguzo and foreign ambassadors giving goodwill messages.

"The conference is to be rounded off in the evening with the induction of new fellows and members of the guild," the statement added.

## Troops gunned down 10 bandits in Kaduna

From Mohammed I. Yaba, Kaduna

Security forces have killed 10 bandits in Kwanan Bataru on the outskirts of Fatika in Giwa Local Government Area of Kaduna State.

A camp, which the bandits use in keeping hostages, was also burnt down.

Some bandits also reportedly sustained injuries during the exchange of gunfire with security operatives.

Commissioner for Internal Security and Home Affairs, Samuel Aruwan, disclosed this in a statement yesterday.

According to him, one Alhaji Abubakar Usman, who is likely to have been kidnapped from a neighbouring state was rescued by the troops and was being debriefed at the moment.

Aruwan said the bandits who managed to escape left behind several motorcycles, one revolver, mobile phones, torchlights and some charms.