

Dozens killed in Niger, Katsina, Kaduna attacks

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There was carnage and bloodbath across four states devastated by banditry and other security challenges over the weekend as terrorists unleashed mayhem on villages and a market killing dozens and displacing hundreds.

The affected states are Niger, Katsina, Kaduna and Zamfara.

The Emir of Katsina, Alhaji Abdulmumin Kabir Usman told visiting Vice President Yemi Osinbajo that the menacing security challenges were giving him and the Katsina State Governor, Aminu Bello Masari sleepless nights.

Dozens killed in Niger

In Niger, at least 20 people and 11 security operatives were reportedly killed with many houses burnt as bandits in their numbers overran Forces Operations Base and launched a fresh attack on Galadima-Kogo and Galkogo Communities of Shiroro Local Government Area on Saturday evening.

Residents of the neighbouring Kuchi, Sabon Kabula, Kafana, Dangun, Zazzaga and Chibani communities in Munya Local Government Area of the state have fled their homes as attackers were said to have been sighted on Sunday morning still roaming the area. Niger State Governor Abubakar Sani Bello confirmed that 11 operatives lost their lives in what he described as unfortunate and regrettable attacks.

In a statement by his Chief Press Secretary, Mary Noel-Berje, the governor called for calm and urged the fleeing communities in Galadiman Kogo and Kuchi in Shiroro and Munya Local Government Areas to await swift and immediate response from the Joint Security Taskforce stressing that their earlier withdrawal was tactical in order to re-strategize.

"We have really ran out of patience with the terrorists and we'll use every means possible to bring an end to this incessant bloody attacks on innocent people. We'll do everything to stop the killings and return normalcy to the affected communities," he said.

Daily Trust gathered from residents of the affected communities that the attackers, in their numbers, rode on motorcycles and operated for hours unchallenged.

The assailants went straight to a security operation based in the town, before attacking residents.

Some eyewitnesses however blamed the attacks on elements of Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP).

Salis Mohammed Sabo, the spokesperson, Coalition of Shiroro Associations, said "I personally counted 16 dead bodies in Galkogo this morning (Sunday) and we are still searching. The vigilantes have

taken the dead bodies of their members since yesterday"

He said the attackers at Galkogo community of Shiroro Local Government numbering over three hundred invaded the community Saturday evening where many were injured, houses and other structures also set ablaze.

"Our people are still on the run, scampering for safety. The security (Special Hunters) have deserted the community. Another information reaching us this morning (On Sunday morning) is that the bandits are being sighted moving towards the same community again."

Sabo called for proactive measures from authorities as he condemned what he called neglect of the people by the state government.

Sani Abubakar Yusuf Kokki, the Co-convenor, Concerned Shiroro Youths also told our correspondent that "During the deadly invasion, the dreaded criminals set many houses ablaze including other valuables while carting away many herds of cattle that were recovered by the vigilante in their previous encounters with criminals after being rustled."

Another resident, Abubakar Shehu said some of the fleeing villagers were taking refuge in Sarkin Pawa, the Headquarters of Munya Local Government Area while some had headed for Minna, the state capital.

The victims pointed fingers at the activities of informants who might have informed the terrorists of the partial withdrawal of some security personnel to Kontagora, Mashegu and Mariga axis for reinforcement.

Before the fresh attack, it was gathered that Galadima Kogo communities had enjoyed peace due to the presence of operatives of the Joint Security Task Force in the area.

When contacted, the Niger State Police Command's Public Relations Officer, DSP Wasiu Abiodun kept sealed lips. But the State Commissioner for Local Government, Chieftaincy Affairs and Internal Security, Emmanuel Umar confirmed the attack to our correspondent by telephone.

He said "One of our FOBs manned by our security was overrun during the attack. But we are already re-strategising to take the fight back to them. Already, there have been ongoing security operations in the area, both air and ground. We are doing our best."

The Chairman, Shiroro Local Government, Suleiman Dauda Chukuba, also told our correspondent on the telephone that the security men were "Overpowered by the bandits who were more in number and more armed with sophisticated weapons."

According to him "This is a tragedy that has just occurred yesterday (Saturday) and I cannot really ascertain the number of casualties for now because the place stands as no go area as I am talking to you now. The only dead bodies that we have recovered were 11 but that is not the exact number

of casualties. There were a lot of people that were affected. Those that were wounded were nine in number and they are in the hospital as I am talking to you."

Also on Saturday, a businesswoman, identified as Hajiya Rabi Usman popularly known as Yayi was reportedly abducted as bandits invaded Tegna, Rafi Local Government Area of Niger State.

A source told our correspondent in confidence that bandits in their numbers invaded Tegna around 11pm on Saturday and whisked away Mrs Umar at her residence.

He said "We all ran for our lives because attackers were shooting sporadically. They went to Hajiya's children's houses but they didn't meet anybody."

Another source said "When they came, they started shooting and went straight to Hajiya Rabi's residence. They picked her and left."

Residents flee Zamfara community over terror attacks

Report from Zamfara says residents of the Kurar Mota community in Bungudu Local Government were currently fleeing their homes owing to the incessant attacks by armed criminals.

Residents told our correspondent that the armed men have spiked their attacks on the community in recent times despite the payment of N7 million levies slammed on them by the attackers.

"Initially they said we must pay N3m and we did pay. During the harvesting season, they warned farmers that no one should go near his farmland until we pay them N4 million which we did. Now hardly a day passes by without them coming to rob or kidnap the residents."

"About 80 per cent of the residents have fled the community. Some of them are taking shelter in Magami while some have decided to leave the district completely," a resident simply called Isah said.

The residents said the attacks on the community are being masterminded by one terror kingpin called Dandela. They said he had been orchestrating a series of deadly assaults on communities in Magami and other neighbouring districts.

Last year, about 13 policemen stationed to provide security to communities around the area were killed by the terror group.

The spokesman of the state Police Command, SP Muhammad Shehu could not be reached for comment at the time of filing this report.

13 killed, others injured in Katsina bandits' attacks

At least 13 people including men, women, and children were reportedly killed in different bandits' attacks in Katsina State in the past few days. Residents of the affected areas said the attacks were as a result of a battle of supremacy between opposing bandits' camps.

Four different camps, which include that of Dankarami, Abdulkarim, Habu Rabe and

one other were said to join forces against one Mani who is living around Illela.

"Mani had previously attacked both Abdulkarim and Dankarami's camps, where he killed some of them including their family members."

"So, that is why the four camps launched this attacks, which began since Wednesday and as I speak with you now they are still in the area, looting everything and setting places on fire," a man among the displaced residents said.

He added that they came and surrounded Illela town and three other nearby villages.

"On Thursday, they began the house-house search in the villages and by Friday they prevented Friday prayers from holding as they looted houses in Illela," he said.

A source also told Daily Trust that they have buried 12 dead bodies so far, adding that others were still in the area but could not be retrieved. The residents said security agencies were informed about the brutal attack but they did little to stop it.

"Some soldiers were there for some minutes but they didn't enter into the town of Illela while the bandits are still inside."

"Equally, police with two APCs came from Dutsinma but were advised to return due to the number and sophisticated weapons of the bandits. I am telling you the bandits are more than 1,500 in number," the source said.

Another source said thousands of residents were displaced from the affected villages.

He said women and children had spent the night in the bush despite the cold. Katsina State Police Command Spokesperson, SP Gambo Isah said the incident was a clash between repentant terrorists and non-converts that resulted in the loss of lives.

In a related development, one person has been killed and two others injured in another bandits attack at Bugaje town.

Similarly, bandits in their numbers were reported to have raided the Yandaka market in Batsari Local Government Area where they rustled animals and carted away foodstuffs.

A source told Daily Trust that the gunmen started shooting sporadically into the air in the market, dispersing the traders and looting their belongings.

11 killed in Zangon Katf

Eleven people were confirmed killed, several others injured while 30 houses were burnt in the Kurmin Masara attack in the Atyp Chiefdom of Zangon Katf Local Government Area of Kaduna. The attack occurred in the early hours of Sunday.

This is coming after a recent visit by a delegation from Kaduna State Government to the chiefdom where the governor reiterates the call for recourse to law.

Speaking with Daily Trust, a youth leader in the chiefdom, Gabriel Joseph, said the attackers

invaded the area while the residents were still sleeping in the early hours of Sunday and started shooting.

Joseph, who was at the scene with security men on Sunday morning, said the attackers "killed and burnt an aged woman and a Village Head who could not escape."

In a statement by the Kaduna State Commissioner for Internal Security and Home Affairs, to the reports, Samuel Aruwan said troops of the Nigerian Air Force Special Forces who responded to distress calls from the area also fell into an ambush as they mobilised to the scene of the attack.

"The troops cleared the ambush and reached the general area, along with troops of Operation Safe Haven (OPSH)."

"As of 4:30pm, eleven residents were confirmed killed, and some inflicted with gunshot injuries," He said.

'Masari and I don't sleep with two eyes closed'

The Emir of Katsina, Alhaji Abdulmumin Kabir Usman, yesterday told Vice President Prof Yemi Osinbajo, that he and the Katsina State Governor, Aminu Bello Masari, could not sleep with their two eyes closed due to daily security challenges in the state.

The emir was addressing the vice president when he paid him a condolence visit over the death of Haji Murja Mangal, the mother of Katsina business mogul, Alhaji Dahiru Mangal who died recently.

"Your coming here for the first time since when you were campaigning is highly historic for us. You are now home and you have talked about the security issue, which is indeed our major concern."

"I have just come back from Kaduna only to be surprised by receiving over 100 telephone calls on planned terrorist attacks which is the order of the day."

"I in person, including the state governor, don't have any time to sleep with two eyes open but I am highly grateful that these criminals have been classified as terrorists."

Earlier in his address, Osinbajo said he was happy to hear that the security situation was improving, as told by the governor.

"The president has decided to meet with all the top security experts and changed where necessary in order to ensure that there is adequate security all over the country."

"I am sure that your Royal Highness will remember that only recently, the president has ordered that bandits should be classified as terrorists. This is to enable security agencies to take more stringent actions against them."

"So we expect to see significant changes and by the grace of God, there will be peace return quickly to all villages and communities not only in Katsina State But also across the country," he said.

The VP added that with all the measures and orders put in place by the federal government significant changes will soon be experienced in the country.