

Bandits kill 5 men, kidnap women, rustle animals in Katsina

●Upsurge in attacks worries villagers

From Tijjani Ibrahim,
Katsina

Bandits on Sunday killed one Rabilu Tukur of Dan Ali village, Danmusa LGA of Katsina State.

Daily Trust gathered that the incident happened around 1pm.

A resident of Dan Ali, who sought anonymity, told our reporter that the deceased, who was a staff of Danmusa LG, was returning home after dropping a passenger at Tashar Biri village.

"He used his motorcycle for commercial purpose and had conveyed a passenger to Tashar Biri village, and was on his way back when the killers followed him and close to Dan Ali village, they attacked him using a cutlass to hack him to death in broad daylight.

He added that bandits had also traced locals who migrated to Dan Ali

village with their animals for their safety and rustled several animals.

He said there is an upsurge in banditry in recent days, with the bandits in most cases operating unchallenged.

In a related development, bandits on Friday attacked Maidabino village, also in Danmusa LGA, where they conducted a house-to-house raid, killed one person, kidnapped his wife and also rustled his animals.

A resident of Maidabino said the attackers came around 2am in their numbers, attacked many houses and in the process killed the man who hid in his toilet.

They shot him and abducted his wife, and left their little children behind.

"What is more frightening is that there are soldiers stationed at Government Day Secondary School in the

village and they were alerted during the attack but they did not show up until the terrorists left," a resident of the village said.

He added that on the same Friday, bandits attacked Sabon Garin Unguwar Ganau, killed three people and kidnapped several women.

He said in the whole of Danmusa LGA, only the local government headquarters was relatively safe as all other villages were frequently attacked.

In another incident, attackers, who were said to have been invited by the local bandits, invaded Yar Tsamiyar Jino village in Kankara LGA wielding weapons.

A resident of the area, however, said a fighter jet of the Nigerian Airforce fired and dispersed them.

The bandits, he said, have placed a levy of N3 million on the villagers.

"Luckily enough, the

locals have a kind of understanding with one of the bandits' gang leaders in the area called Buzaru, who was once attacked by the Nigerian Airforce.

"It was that bandits' commander that asked the newcomers to refrain from collecting the levy or he would fight them. That is what saved the villagers," he claimed.

Bandits take over farms, force villagers to work at Kankara

Daily Trust gathered that villages in the western part of Kankara LGA were mostly under the control of bandits' leaders who had confiscated farms and forced the villagers to work for them.

A resident of Pawwa, who is taking refuge in Kankara, headquarters of the LGA, who also has his farms occupied by the bandits, said from Pawwa, Sabon Gari, Sha'iskawa, Gidan Galadima, up to villages close to Katoge, were all occupied by bandits.

"I had to beg one of the bandits' leaders to let me use one of my farms. He allowed us a small space to cultivate while he cultivated all the other farms.

"They have occupied our areas; they have seized all our farms except for a few and they are forcing our people to work of them. Some of them will cook spaghetti for the people who are forced to work from morning to evening, while others will only give you water throughout.

"We are just like slaves in that area. The bandits migrated from Zamfara area with their sophisticated weapons, and the areas are safe haven for them as no one challenges them," a resident of Pawwa village, one of the occupied areas also said.

The bandits' atrocities were coming at a time when the state government has earmarked N7.8bn to procure security

equipment to combat banditry, with Governor Radda, saying his administration would be more proactive than being on the defensive.

When contacted, the Police Public Relations Officer in the state, ASP Abubakar Sadiq Aliyu, confirmed the incident at Dan Ali.

He said there was an ongoing operation in the area to apprehend the perpetrators.

On the recent resurgence of attacks in the state, the police spokesman said there was a comprehensive plan underway involving the state government, police and other security agencies to address the situation.

"I cannot disclose the details of the plan, but I assure you that we're preparing in a combined effort by the state government, the police and other security agencies to deal with the situation," he said.