

Bandits kill 21 in Kaduna, Katsina; recruit minors in Sokoto

From Mohammed Ibrahim Yaba (Kaduna), Tijjani Ibrahim (Katsina) & Yusha'u A. Ibrahim (Sokoto)

Bandits have invaded Gindin Dutse Makyalu village, Kufana District, Kajuru Local Government Area of Kaduna State, burning 12 villagers in their homes.

The attackers also torched 17 houses in the community during the attack that occurred around 6am on Sunday.

A report written by Mr Stephen Maikori, Overseer Kufana District obtained by Daily Trust confirmed the incident, saying seven other people were injured by the attackers.

The latest incident came after a similar report published yesterday in which bandits were said to have shot dead nine people in Kwasan community, Kajuru LGA and Gwada community in Igabi LGA all in Kaduna State.

They also abducted 35 other persons, including a retired Director of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) identified as Zakariya Markus, his brother and the brother's wife.

Speaking on yesterday's incident, Maikori said, "In the morning today (Sunday 18/2/2024), around 6am, bandits attacked the community in large numbers and killed 12 people by burning them, while seven others sustained serious injuries. In addition, 17 residential houses were set ablaze," he said in the report.

He listed the names of those killed and the injured as well as residents whose houses were set ablaze.

Daily Trust gathered that the attackers opened fire on other villagers but did not abduct any member of the community.

The recent attacks on some communities within Kaduna by bandits which led to killings and destruction of property attracted response from the state government.

In his reaction to the incident, Governor Uba Sani said while working with security forces and other critical stakeholders on mitigating security challenges, he received security reports on renewed bandits' attacks resulting in the loss of lives, kidnappings and destruction of property in Kajuru and Igabi LGAs.

The governor, in a statement issued by the Overseeing Commissioner, Ministry of

Internal Security and Home Affairs, condemned the attacks and prayed for the repose of the souls of the deceased.

He also directed the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) to, as a matter of urgency, assist the affected communities in Kajuru and Igabi LGAs.

The governor further reiterated the government's commitment to tackling the security challenges across the state.

Meanwhile, bandits were on the loose again in Katsina State in recent days during which they killed no fewer than nine people in attacks in the three LGAs of Batsari, Jibia and Kankara.

In the recent attacks, which were confirmed by the Commissioner for Internal Security and Home Affairs, Dr Nasir Babangida Muazu, two people were killed in Batsari and three others wounded.

He said in Kankara, a ward head was killed in Yargoje village, while in Daddara village of Jibia one person was injured.

A resident of Yargoje who spoke on condition of anonymity, corroborated the commissioner's position, saying the attackers came on two motorcycles and shot the ward head dead and attempted to force open a shop but were unsuccessful.

Earlier on Thursday, there was a report of a bandits' attack on worshippers in a mosque in

Kankara where they killed three people and kidnapped many others.

A source added that the bandits penetrated further into Kankara town where they kidnapped a husband and wife, and that in the process killed the husband because he refused to allow them to take him away.

According to reports, on the same night, the bandits attacked the house of a vigilante named Sani, who was the head of the group in Tudun Boka neighbourhood in Kankara town, but that he managed to escape and they abducted his wife and son.

Similarly, a resident of Yargoje told our reporter that on Wednesday, bandits attacked their village, killed three people and injured three others.

However, both the governor and the commissioner of internal security said the recent attacks in the state were just attempts by the bandits to show that they were still around despite having been significantly subdued by the sustained efforts of the federal and state security agents.

"If you have observed, the attackers now come in a haste, shoot sporadically, kill some, kidnap some and run away all within a few minutes, unlike before that they come with specific targets due to the activities of informants and operate for several hours," the

commissioner said.

He said about 70 per cent of the problem had been dealt with, adding that the aspect of informants had also been eliminated in the chain of bandits' attacks which also helped in suppressing their nefarious activities.

In a related development, the menace of kidnapping is taking a new dimension in Sokoto State as terrorists now recruit minors into their dastardly acts, Daily Trust can report.

Recently, two minors, Surajo Rugga and Sanda Bube, of Baliyo village, Binji LGA of Sokoto State were allegedly lured into kidnapping by two suspected kidnappers, Faruku Usman and Umaru Jemmu.

Little Rugga and Bube, aged between 13 and 14, were among the 15 suspects recently paraded by the police in the state over alleged kidnapping and armed banditry.

Jemmu and Usman, who were paraded as masters to the minors, were accused of the kidnap of Harande Gidado, Buba Zaria and Manuga Kwair.

According to the CP, after the suspected kidnappers abducted their victims and took them to an unknown destination in a forest, they invited the two minors to guard them.

Speaking to Daily Trust, little Rugga said "We were rearing animals when Jemmu and Usman

arrived on a motorbike. They carried us on the bike into a forest where three abducted persons were kept and asked us to keep an eye on them.

"After we stayed with the victims for a while, the kidnappers returned from the town, then we left and since then we have never gone back to the place again," he said.

The three kidnap victims were allegedly taken into a forest by the abductors and tied with a rope before the youngsters were invited to guard them.

One of the suspected kidnappers, Faruku Usman, told journalists that he was indicted by the minors to have committed the offence, saying "The boys only mentioned my name as a kidnapper, but I have never kidnapped anybody in my life.

"My friend whom we were arrested together can testify that I am not a kidnapper. The boys only indicted me but I am not a kidnapper. God knows I am not a kidnapper," he said.

Addressing a press conference, the State Commissioner of Police, Ali Hayatu Kaigama said police preliminary investigations confirmed that the three abducted persons regained their freedom after paying N10 million each as ransom.

Kaigama explained that three of the suspects confessed to having committed the offence, while the fourth denied involvement in the crime.

The commissioner said the suspects would be arraigned as soon as the police completed investigations.



■ From left: The Minister of Aviation, Festus Keyamo father of Shyngle Wigwe Herbets and the Minister of Art, Culture and Creative Economy, Hannatu Musa Musawa, during the ministers' condolence visit to the parents of late Wigwe in Lagos yesterday

Photo: NAN