

Bandits kill 10 in Benue, 2 cops in Zamfara, burn houses in Niger

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Ten people have been killed in attacks on four villages in Apa Local Government Area of Benue State.

The attacks, which happened within the space of three days, also displaced hundreds of residents, who are now taking shelter in the local government headquarters.

The state governor, Hyacinth Alia, however, accused some indigenes of the state of inviting foreign herders, who are wreaking havoc in many communities.

Meanwhile, in Zamfara State, two police officers were gunned down when bandits attacked Zurmi town.

Another set of bandits burnt over 30 houses and scores of cattle during an attack in the Allawa community, Shiroro Local government area of Niger State.

In Yobe State, three ISWAP fighters were killed by troops of the Joint Task Force (North-East) Operation Hadin Kai Sector 2 in Damaturu. The Nigerian Army said the terrorists were killed when troops responded to a report on the presence of terrorist elements at Maltari village near Kukareta, where they were reportedly extorting Zakat levies from community members.

Benue attacks
The victims of the Benue attacks, which killed 10 people in Ikobi Council Ward in Apa LGA, said the incidents happened a few days after the invasion of the Imana community where four people were killed last week.

One of the villagers, who is now displaced as a result of the incident, told our correspondent on phone that nine dead bodies were recovered from the affected communities at the time

they fled to take shelter at the Apa LGA headquarters in Ugbokpo.

He said, "Nine persons were killed three days back from attacks on Ibele, Ochumekwu and Ijaha by armed herders. It has been sustained attacks on our people for the past two weeks."

"They have been terrorising us. As I speak with you now, in Ikobi, there is nobody and Ikobi has a population of over one million people. All the people have run away and are right now taking shelter at Ugbokpo, the LGA headquarters."

Barr Eche Akpoko, who is the chairman of Apa Development Association, confirmed the attacks to our correspondent.

Akpoko said one more corpse was discovered after the nine found earlier, bringing the number of those killed to 10 so far.

He said of the 10 casualties, five people were killed in Ijaha-Ibele, three in Ochumekwu while the remaining two were killed in Adjia and Kano villages respectively.

"I can confirm to you that there was a serial attack on the following communities, Ijaha-Ibele 5, Ochumekwu 3, Adjia 1, and Kano 1 all of Apa LGA on 14th, 15th & 16th of February 2024, with a total number of 10 casualties ascertained so far! We condemn the dastardly act in strong terms," Akpoko said.

The police spokeswoman for Benue Command, SP Catherine Anene, however, said she did not have the report.

'Benue indigenes inviting foreign herders'

Meanwhile, Governor Hyacinth Alia has accused some indigenes of the state of inviting herders from Niger Republic, who are wreaking havoc in many communities.

Donald Kumun, the Principal Special Assistant to the Governor on Print Media, in a statement in Makurdi, said the governor



■ Gov Alia

stated this on Sunday at the Chapel of Grace in the Government House, Makurdi, while addressing congregants after the mass service.

"The security report has revealed that some Benue indigenes have gone out of their way to invite herdsmen from Niger Republic to troop into Benue State, all in the name of bringing down this administration and this is unacceptable. The security agents are doing their work," he said.

The governor, however, appealed to the people of the state to remain calm, stressing that the security agencies are ready to ensure the safety of all and sundry.

He urged the enemies of the state who were not ready to join hands with his administration to improve the well-being of the people to leave.

Normalcy returns to Zamfara community after bandits kill 2 policemen

Normalcy has returned to Zurmi Local Government Area of Zamfara State after bandits killed two policemen and injured three others in Nasarawa Zurmi, on the outskirts of Zurmi town on Sunday.

Muhammad Yusuf, a resident of Zurmi confirmed to the Daily Trust that bandits who stormed the outskirts around 6pm on Sunday, fired at some



■ Gov Lawal

policemen on duty, killing two of them while the third sustained gunshot injuries.

Yusuf added that two civilians, including a woman, also sustained gunshot wounds during the attack that lasted a few minutes before the bandits left the village.

Another resident, Ibrahim Muhammad, confirmed that over 30 shops, several motorbikes and a house were razed down by the bandits, saying "When the bandits realized that the residents had run away from their homes, they started setting their belongings on fire."

Police confirmed the attack but said one officer, a Divisional Crime Officer in the area, Shitu Musa, was killed while two others sustained gunshot wounds.

"Our men repelled and killed many bandits, while several others took to their heels with gunshot wounds. While the bandits were retreating, they burnt down some houses and shops in the area," ASP Yazid Abubakar, a police spokesman in the state said in a statement.

Houses, cattle, foodstuffs razed in Niger community
Over 30 houses and scores of cattle have been reportedly burnt by bandits during an attack on the Allawa community of Shiroro LGA of Niger State.

Allawa is one of the major agrarian communities with

over 2,000 residents in the Lakpma axis of Shiroro LGA.

The chairman, Allawa Youth Connect, Yusuf Musa, told Daily Trust that the attackers invaded the community at about 8pm on Sunday, saying they were yet to establish the number of people kidnapped.

He said about 100 cattle, 35 motorcycles and 150 bags of assorted grains belonging to residents and 30 houses were burnt down during the attack.

Residents said they could not move for 1km from the community without coming in contact with the terrorists for years, saying the terrorists have permanent camps in Allawa Forest.

The bandits attacked the community on Friday morning, killing a vigilante and kidnapping 12 people.

Last night's attack forced many residents to flee to Pandogari, Kuta and Gwada, it was gathered.

Efforts to reach government officials for comment were unsuccessful. The mobile phones of the Chief Press Secretary to the Governor, Bologi Ibrahim, were switched off as of the time of calling yesterday.

A call was put across to the Commissioner for Homeland Security, Brig. Gen. Bello Abdullahi Mohammed (rtd), but went unanswered. He also did not respond to a text message

sent to his phone.

Also, the Niger State Police Command's Public Relations Officer, DSP Wasiu Abiodun, could not be reached. He did not respond to a message sent to his phone.

ISWAP fighters killed in Yobe

Troops of the Joint Task Force (North-East) Operation Hadin Kai Sector 2 Damaturu have killed three ISWAP fighters in Yobe State.

The acting Assistant Director of Army Public Relations of Sector 2, Captain Muhammad Shehu, said this in a statement made available to newsmen in Damaturu.

According to him, a fighting patrol from Sector 2 of the Joint Task Force (North-East) Operation Hadin Kai deployed at the Forward Operating Base in Kukareta, in collaboration with the Yobe State Hunters Group, conducted the special operation in the area.

He said the special fighting patrol team successfully engaged with the terrorist elements near Lawanti village, resulting in the neutralization of three terrorists.

Shehu further said the neutralized terrorists are believed to be affiliated with the group responsible for the attack on the troops' camp at Kukareta on Sunday, February 4, 2024.

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

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