

25 Killed As Bandits, Vigilantes Clash In Bauchi



Houses destroyed during bandits attack in Azare, Bauchi State, recently

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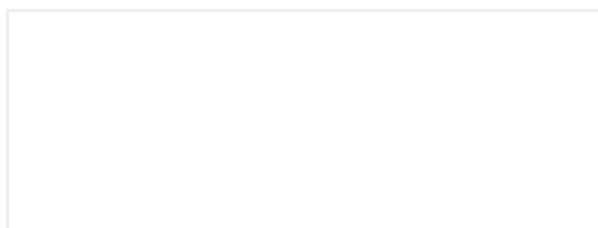
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At least 25 people have been reported killed in Alkaleri Local Government Area of Bauchi State following a clash between suspected bandits and members of a vigilante group.

Daily Trust gathered that the casualties included nine vigilante members, five bandits, and 11 residents who were among those abducted.

A statement by the Police Public Relations Officer, CSP Ahmed Wakil, said: “On May 4, 2025, at about 09:40 hours, the Command received a report from Alkaleri Divisional Police Headquarters regarding an incident that occurred earlier that same day at about 05:40 hours.



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“A combined team of professional hunters from Duguri and Gwana District, while on a routine patrol along Duguri, Mansur, and the Dajin Madam forest bordering Bauchi and Plateau States, was ambushed by armed bandits. This confrontation resulted in numerous casualties on both sides, including members of the vigilante group and the bandits themselves.”

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Wakil further explained, “Upon receiving the report, a tactical team was dispatched to the scene, where they recovered the bodies of the victims. Preliminary investigations revealed that the deceased included both vigilante operatives and civilians from Sabuwar Sara village, who were mercilessly shot while attempting to flee the attack.”

He said the police command has assigned a specialised team to intensify efforts to apprehend those responsible for the heinous act and anyone found to be connected.

He assured the public that the perpetrators would be brought to justice.

A resident of Duguri—Governor Bala A. Mohammed’s hometown and one of the affected communities—Malam Isa Muhammad, said the clash occurred Sunday night when vigilante members pursued a gang of bandits who had earlier kidnapped 16 villagers and rustled about 500 cattle from a neighbouring village.

Muhammad said the vigilantes were alerted after the bandits completed their operation and quickly trailed them, engaging them in a gun battle around Dajin Madam forest.

“Unfortunately, when the bandits noticed that the vigilantes were close, they opened fire. The vigilantes returned fire, and a gunfight ensued.

“The battle lasted for about an hour. In the end, nine vigilantes and 11 of the kidnapped persons were killed,” he said.

Another resident and vigilante member, who requested anonymity, said, “A vigilante member, Malam Rufa’i, from Duguri, was killed, along with one from Kajigamu village and two others from Yelwan Duguri.

“The remaining casualties were from Mansur village and some parts of Jos, Plateau State. We are carrying out a joint operation between vigilantes from Bauchi and Jos. Honestly, I can’t confirm the total number of deaths on the Plateau side.”

Shehu Ibrahim, another resident, lamented that the bandits were heavily armed.

“It wasn’t an attack on a village but a direct clash between vigilantes and bandits. The bandits had already abducted victims and rustled cattle. The vigilantes tracked them down and engaged them,” he said.

The Chairman of the Alkalari branch of the National Youth Council, Comrade Bala Mohammed Duguri, confirmed that nine vigilantes were killed during the confrontation.

“The bandits killed four vigilantes in Duguri, five in Mansur, as well as other residents and some of the criminals,” he said.

In a telephone interview, he added that the bandits abducted several residents and took them to an unknown location. “As of now, there’s no information on the whereabouts of the abducted persons,” he said.

Governor Mohammed condoles affected families

Meanwhile, Bauchi State Governor Bala Mohammed has expressed deep sorrow over the incident, following preliminary reports indicating that professional hunters on patrol along

Duguri, Mansur, and Dajin Madam forest were ambushed and killed by suspected bandits in Mansur village, Alkaleri LGA.

A statement signed by the governor's special adviser on media and publicity, Mukhtar Gidado, said: "This heinous and senseless act of violence is a painful reminder of the continued threat posed by criminal elements who seek to disrupt the peace and security of our communities."

The governor extended heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families, the people of Alkaleri LGA, and the entire state. He prayed for the souls of the fallen heroes who gave their lives to protect their communities.

He reiterated the government's unwavering commitment to tackling all forms of insecurity and called on residents to cooperate with security agencies by providing timely and credible information that could help prevent future tragedies.

Gidado noted that while efforts are being intensified in collaboration with security forces to apprehend the perpetrators, Governor Mohammed assured the public that no effort will be spared in ensuring Bauchi remains safe and peaceful.

Banditry hotspots in Bauchi

Bauchi State has three major banditry flashpoints that have become safe havens for criminal gangs. These include the Burra-Lame forest in Ningi LGA, mountainous areas in Toro LGA, and the vast Yankari forest and surrounding areas in Alkaleri LGA.

Findings revealed that hundreds of displaced bandits and other criminals from Zamfara State have relocated to the Burra-Lame forest, where they terrorise residents, kidnap victims for ransom, and attack travellers.

In 2021, the chairman of Ningi LGA, Mamuda Hassan Tabla, raised the alarm over the influx of around 5,000 displaced bandits from Zamfara, who had settled in the Lame/Burra Game Reserve and were terrorising Burra and neighbouring communities.

The chairman said in 2020 alone, residents of Burra paid over N72 million in ransom to secure the release of kidnapped victims.

The second major flashpoint, Alkaleri LGA, has suffered repeated attacks, killings, and kidnappings. In November 2022, 17 people were killed by bandits in Rimi village within the Yankari Game Reserve.

A resident of Yashi village, Babawo Abdullahi, said the attackers stormed Rimi shortly after Friday prayers and opened fire on villagers.

He said, “The entire village has been deserted since the deadly attack. Women, children, and the elderly fled to nearby towns for safety. As I speak, there’s not a single resident left in Rimi.”

This dire situation prompted the state government to request military intervention, resulting in the deployment of troops to Duguri village to contain the escalating violence.

Investigations further revealed that mining activities, worth billions of naira, as well as illegal timber logging, have attracted criminal syndicates to Alkaleri. The vast, dense Yankari forest now serves as a sanctuary for bandits engaged in kidnapping and ransom collection.

The third flashpoint is Toro LGA, which has also witnessed numerous bandit attacks and kidnappings. Although security forces had previously curbed the menace, a resurgence in the Gamau and Saminaka axis has created new fears.

Farmers have abandoned their farms, traders now close shops early, and wealthy residents have fled their villages. Commercial drivers delay operations or close early to avoid falling into ambushes.

The Magama-Gumau–Saminaka road, once a major relief route bypassing the deteriorating Jos-Kaduna highway, has now become a deadly trap, particularly at night.

Findings indicate that bandits have regrouped in the Lame/Burra forest and surrounding mountains, launching attacks on innocent citizens after being displaced from Ningi LGA.

This prompted Dabo Ismail Haruna, the member representing Toro federal constituency, to write to the Inspector General of Police, Kayode Egbetokun, requesting urgent deployment of security forces.

In his letter, he wrote, “I wish to draw the attention of the Inspector General to renewed offensive attacks in Toro LGA. Communities such as Gumau, Bargan Fulani, Salama, and Zalau have become epicentres of these unfortunate incidents.

“Most victims are local farmers. These attacks have become routine. The gangs strike at night or even in broad daylight, leaving residents in constant fear. Busy roads like Bauchi–Jos and Magama-Gumau–Saminaka are increasingly targeted by armed robbers and bandits.”