

NEWS | TOP STORY

Gunmen Kill 4 Family Members In Birnin Gwari



Birnin Gwari town

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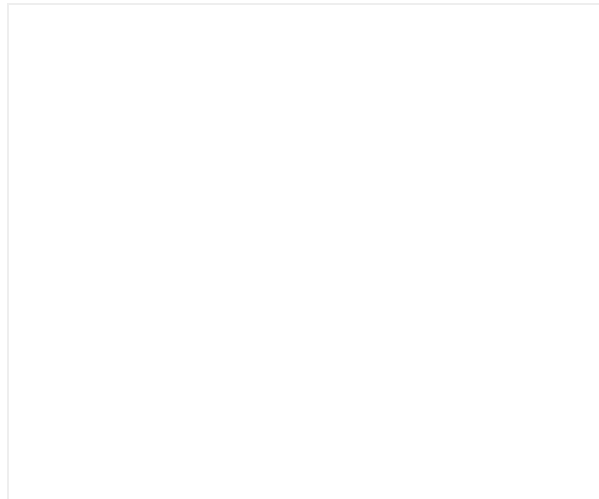
Suspected bandits have attacked the Kakangi community in the western part of Birnin Gwari Local Government Area of Kaduna State, killing five farmers. It was gathered that out the five, four are from the same family.

Three other villagers sustained injuries during the attack, which occurred on Tuesday evening as they were returning from their farms. This is coming despite the peace deal in the area.





According to sources in the area, the assailants were on a retaliatory mission after local vigilantes from neighbouring Niger State communities reportedly killed a suspected bandit on Monday.



It was gathered from local sources that Niger vigilantes always blamed attacks in the communities on bandits from the Birnin Gwari forest who usually cross over to attack villagers in border communities.

Daily Trust gathered that after the Monday incident, the suspected bandits, whose member was killed, decided to retaliate against villagers from Kakangi who were returning from their farms on Tuesday.

Convener of the Birnin Gwari–Niger Inter-Border Communities for Peace and Development (BG-NI CUPD), Ishaq Usman Kasai, confirmed the incident.

Kasai, who is also a former Chairman of the Birnin Gwari Emirate Progressive Union (BEPU), added that the three injured farmers are currently receiving treatment at Jibril Mai Gwari General Hospital.

“We condemn in the strongest terms these unjustified killings of innocent farmers in Kakangi and express our heartfelt condolences to the Kakangi Chiefdom’s Council and the entire people of the community.

“We, therefore, issue this urgent call to the local government authorities, the Kaduna State Government, the Federal Government of Nigeria, and all other actors of the peace deal and reconciliation to take immediate and decisive measures to prevent a total breakdown of the fragile peace that the people of Birnin Gwari have long worked hard to restore,” he said.

A villager, who pleaded anonymity, explained: “Local vigilantes from Niger State usually trail bandits disturbing their communities into Kaduna territory. That was what happened on Monday when they attacked and killed one of them.

“So, the bandits retaliated by attacking our people who were innocent while returning from their farms on Tuesday evening, killing five people while three others sustained gunshot injuries,” he said.

Daily Trust gathered that four of those killed were from the same family, while the injured victims were taken to Jibril Mai Gwari General Hospital, Birnin Gwari, for treatment.

Since 2015, Birnin Gwari residents have faced relentless attacks and abductions, with travellers forced to rely on military escorts, often with limited success along the Kaduna–Birnin Gwari highway.

After a peace deal signed in October 2024 between Kaduna State and the so-called repentant bandits, residents witnessed relative peace for months apart from minor incidents of phone and motorcycle snatching.

It's an isolated case – gov't

Ahmed Maiyaki, Kaduna State Commissioner Designate Ministry of Information described the incident as an isolated case which does not affect the Peace deal.

“It is an isolated attack made by some people coming from neighbouring states.

That is why the peace deal we are working to ensure it is integrated; we must have a regional plan.

“So, this is an isolated case. Our peace deal, the Kaduna model, as envisioned by the Governor, Uba Sani, is still intact, not under threat,” he said.

Alhaji Zubairu Abdulrauf, a traditional title holder and community leader in Birnin Gwari Emirate, told Daily Trust a few days ago that the peace accord signed in October 2024 has brought significant stability to the area.

“In the last eight months, there has been no attack or mass abduction. People and goods now move freely,” Abdulrauf said.

Although he acknowledged some minor infractions, such as phone and motorcycle thefts from farmers, he emphasised that no kidnappings or highway attacks have been recorded in months.

He noted that even Fulani communities living in remote forest areas are engaging peacefully with locals.

According to him, local markets have also seen a resurgence, attracting traders from across Nigeria and neighbouring countries like the Benin Republic.

State policing is the answer – Expert

Abel John Bassa, a criminologist and security expert, described the recent incident as unfortunate, adding that it should be taken seriously by stakeholders in the state.

He also said that the government should handle sensitive matters properly, noting that it needed to look into the main issues, such as: “What is the source of the problem and how can we tackle it?”

“When handling a situation like this, we should think of the long-term effect. And when we decide to act, it should be with sincerity, not based on political reasons or political interests because most of what we are seeing today is the result of the government not appropriately setting things up the way they are supposed to be done.

“If you want sustainable peace, you must bring both stakeholders and the government together to talk. They know the environment, so they will give ideas.

“The government should also follow those ideas because you cannot just sit at the government house and expect to know what to do.

“It is the people there who know the right answers. When you consult them, they will tell you what to do, because they know exactly what is happening and they know the people involved.

“By doing this, they can help you achieve your aim. Whenever something happens, they can immediately inform you. But when you exclude them, when you are not working with them, I’m telling you, no matter how hard you try, the solution will not be sustainable,” the expert said.

“We keep hearing of one incident or another. That is how it will continue unless something is done. It is now time for the government to come back again to re-strategise because if what was started did not work, then you must look for another way,” he said.

He further urged the governor to implement community policing to tackle the issue, saying this means that locals can relate with the security agencies directly by providing them with useful

information.

“They must have a communication link, a contact with security, and confidence that nothing will happen to them if they give information because sometimes, it’s not that people don’t see what is going on, it’s just that they don’t have trust in the security agencies.”

The Kaduna peace model

The peace accord in Birnin Gwari was anchored on the Kaduna Model, a comprehensive strategy developed by the state government in collaboration with federal agencies to address insecurity through both kinetic and non-kinetic approaches.

The model, driven by the Peace Dialogue Group, includes disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR) of bandits, alongside investment in rural development and conflict resolution. It aims to address both the root causes and symptoms of violence.

The process involved tireless engagement with stakeholders, especially through dialogue. Several senior bandit leaders reportedly laid down arms after numerous meetings built mutual trust.

To reinforce the peace effort, the government also banned the activities of the Yan Sa Kai local vigilantes, particularly in Birnin Gwari, due to concerns over extrajudicial actions that escalated violence.

While the state adopted a carrot-and-stick approach, welcoming those who embraced peace, it also warned that anyone who resumed violence would face decisive military action.

Under the agreement, bandits pledged to stop attacks and allow farmers to access their lands, especially forest-based farms, without fear of abduction or death.

In return, the bandits demanded that the long-shut Birnin Gwari cattle market be reopened, and that they be allowed to access communities, markets, and primary healthcare centres without being profiled or targeted.

They also urged security forces to cease forest raids on those who have embraced peace. Governor Uba Sani, upon assuming office, launched the Kaduna Model in partnership with the Office of the National Security Adviser to pursue sustainable peace.

Despite the improved security situation, findings reveal that banks in the area remain closed. Birnin Gwari has had no functional banking services for over a decade.

The three banks that previously operated in the town were forced to shut down due to persistent insecurity and a lack of reliable network infrastructure.

Residents said the absence of banking facilities continues to hinder economic recovery and access to financial services, despite the recent return of relative peace.

When contacted, the Police Command's Public Relations Officer, DSP Mansir Hassan, promised to get back to this reporter, but had not done so as of the time of filing this report.