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Two die in renewed attacks on southern Kaduna

By Saxone Akhaine (Kaduna), Ann Godwin (Port Harcourt) and Njadvara Musa (Maiduguri) | 09 January 2017 | 4:35 am



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Defying entreaties by government and the military, gunmen suspected to be Fulani herdsmen have again invaded southern Kaduna communities, killing two people.

They launched attacks on Tsonje village, near Kagoro town in Kauru Local Government Area. The two people were declared missing after the invasion.

The renewed attacks have threatened the hope of an early return of peace to the much-troubled southern part of the state. These fresh hostilities require that the government at the federal and state levels need to do more to beef up the security in the area. The government needs to go further by meting out the right punishment to those behind the killings to serve as a deterrent to others.

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Leaders in southern Kaduna fear that the remnants of the defeated Boko Haram insurgents might have infiltrated several communities in the area to join the Fulani herdsmen.

The Senator representing Kaduna South district, Danjuma Tella Laah, in a statement yesterday in Kaduna, lamented the attack and killings by the herdsmen on Saturday.

"Today as we observed the national mourning day ordered by the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) over the unabated killings of law-abiding citizens of Nigeria in southern Kaduna, and the forcible taking of their lands, I wish to sadly inform again that two persons were killed yesterday (Saturday) by same marauding Fulani herdsmen terrorists," the lawmaker said.

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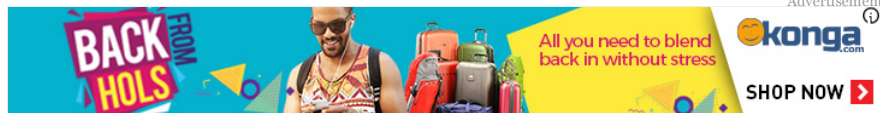


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According to him, “the death of these two men identified as Ephraim Ezekiel, 19, and Joshua Ladi, 41, occurred after an almost 24-hour gun battle between the terrorists on one hand and the police officers as well as local vigilantes as the Fulani terrorists tried to overrun a village called Tsonje.” Tsonje is close to Kagoro town in Kaura Local Government.

Laah said: “I have been reliably informed that after the terrorists retreated to their well-known camp behind Pasakori community at the foot of Kagoro mountain, a few kilometers away, two other persons have been declared missing.

“Information reaching me from around the troubled areas affirmed that despite the large presence of troops of the Nigeria Army that have been drafted to assist the police in battling these terrorists, not a single soldier was drafted to assist the police and the local vigilantes in spite of sporadic gunfire that could be heard from kilometers away and throughout the onslaught from Friday morning to Saturday morning.



“This is a very sad development. I had earlier praised the Federal Government when these troops were first deployed in southern Kaduna last week. I had absolute confidence that the Nigerian Army would quickly put an end to this wild and cruel onslaught. As I speak, Fulani terrorists are still occupying several villages in Southern Kaduna.”

While calling for a more concerted effort at bringing peace to the communities, Laah said: “I am bringing this curious development to the attention of the Nigerian Army and the public to appreciate the grave condition under which parts of my constituency have found themselves.

“Already, Ninte, Akwa, Golgofa, Gada Biyu and Anjul have been dominated and inhabited by these terrorists after many of the villagers were killed, the villages plundered before being set ablaze since May last year. As of today, the terrorists have moved in to these communities. The un-harvested crops of the villagers that have fled, have become food for their cattle.”

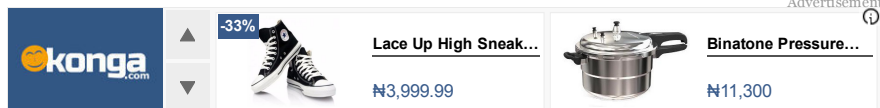
Meanwhile, Christians across the country are condemning the killings in southern Kaduna. Officials of CAN in the 19 Northern states and Abuja said that despite the assurances by government that the military would maintain peace in the area, lives and property were still at risk.

At press time, the state government and police were yet to react officially to the attacks.

The Kaduna Police Command’s spokesman, ASP Aliyu Usman neither picked the call put through his phone nor reply the text messages seeking official reaction.

Also, the media aide to the governor, Samuel Aruwan, after a series of telephone calls, replied by text, saying, “sorry, I can’t talk right now.”

The spokesman of CAN in the northern states, Rev. Joseph Hayap blamed the government for allegedly not enforcing the decision to fortify the troubled zone with sufficient troops to repel any attack by the Fulani herdsmen.



Hayap said: “What we have been experiencing in this country is that government is engaged in rhetoric, this is time for action. The attackers know that the government is only engaging in rhetoric, that is why they reinforced to continue their attack.”

On the possibility of Boko Haram insurgents infiltrating southern Kaduna to provide support to the herdsmen, Hayap said: “It is not impossible and that is why I am saying that the government should be serious about what is going on in southern Kaduna and not allow it to escalate more than what we are seeing now.

“It is not enough for government to say that they are bringing two military formations into the area; they should have done that before even allowing people to know what is happening. This is the commitment we are talking about, if we are really serious to bring this problem to an end.”

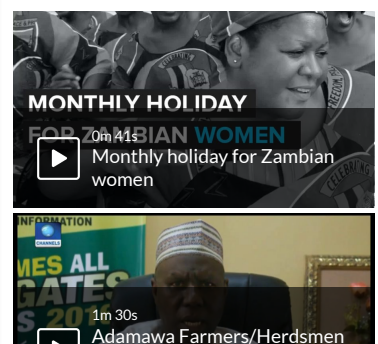
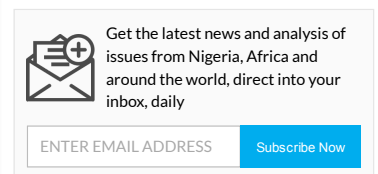
Also worried by the incident yesterday, members of CAN in Rivers State staged a peaceful protest to the Government House in Port Harcourt. The protesters, mostly clerics, were received at the gate by the representative of Governor Nyesom Wike, the Chief of Staff, Chukwuemeka Woke. In an address on behalf of the state chapter of CAN, Primate Anyanasiike I. C. called on President Muhammadu Buhari to end the genocide.

“Let Mr. President allay the fear of the people in the current imbalance which clearly exists in the appointments of security personnel, agencies and managers of national security,” he said.

The Yobe State chapter of CAN urged the authorities in Kaduna State to fish out the suspected killers for prosecution.

At a news conference by its chairman, Rev. Jibrin Joshua in Damaturu, the Yobe CAN said the Federal and Kaduna State Governments should, as matter of urgency, end the killings.

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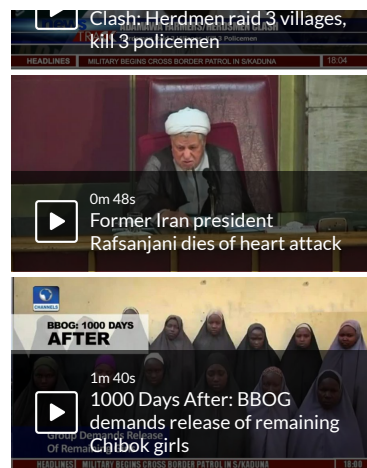
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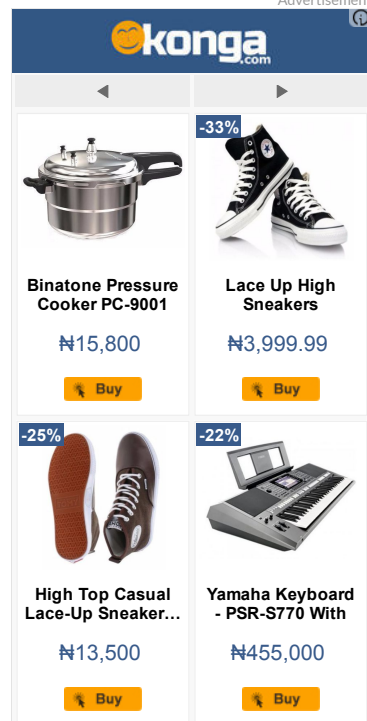
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