21 killed, 40 kidnapped in Niger

By Saxone Akhaine and Abdulganiyu Alabi, Kaduna

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About 21 persons have been killed and 40 kidnapped in a fresh attack on communities in Shiroro Council of Niger State.

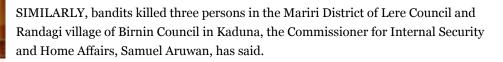
Some 300 gunmen on motorcycles reportedly stormed four villages of Kurege, Sabon Gida, Sararai and Rafin Kanya shot and killed some people and abducted others.

An indigene of Shiroro, Galadima Salisu, told newsmen yesterday that unless governments at all levels come to the aid of the community, the area could be taken over by bandits.

All efforts to contact the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Niger State Command, ASP Wasiu Abiodun, for comment on the attack failed.

However, Secretary to the State Government (SSG), Ahmed Matane, confirmed the incident, but denied knowledge of the number of casualties.

Matane said that the state government was doing everything possible within its powers to address the problem of insecurity bedevilling the people in the state.

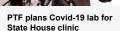


He said the Operation Safe Haven (OPSH) reported an attack to the state government.

According to him, investigation into the incidents is in progress, as troops intensify patrol in the general area.

Aruwan said a report from security operatives had it that about six attackers, masked and dressed in black, invaded the community late Monday and began shooting sporadically.

Troops, upon receiving a distress call, mobilised to the location and engaged the assailants who then fled into the forest, he added.



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