

# Gunmen kill 18 in Niger, kidnap Bauchi residents

From John Akubo (Abuja), Rauf Oyewole (Bauchi) and Njadvara Musa (Damaturu)

**G**UNMEN have reportedly killed 18 worshippers at Maza-Kuka in Mashegu Local Council of Niger State.

The armed men, in the early hours of yesterday, *The Guardian* gathered, invaded the village in large numbers and attacked the villagers, who were performing their early morning prayers.

It was learnt that the gunmen, who came on motorcycles, went straight into the Mosque and shot sporadically resulting in the death of worshippers.

Secretary to the Niger State government, Ahmed Matane, said 16 persons were killed in the mosque, while another person was

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attacked at Kaboji village by the bandits.

Matane explained that the state government had already dispatched a team of military personnel to the area to trail the bandits who fled to the forest.

**A**LSO, Bauchi State Governor, Bala Mohammed, has reported ongoing cases of abduction and killings in six local councils of the state by bandits, who also destroy properties.

Mohammed made this known, yesterday at a meeting with council bosses, the deputy governor, Secretary to the State Government (SSG) and some commissioners, at the Government

House.

He said: "Bauchi has been adjudged as a secure state, but this is just a gimmick," adding that the meeting was to address the recent upsurge in the cases of insecurity in the rural areas.

The governor expressed disappointment over alleged "connivance of the terrorists with government officials" to perpetrate evil.

**H**OWEVER, troops of Operation Hadin Kai (OPHK) have repelled the Islamic State of West Africa Province (ISWAP) terrorists on Katarko community in Gujba Council of Yobe State.

The terrorists, who reportedly burst from Sambisa Forest, attempted to attack

the Katarko military base in 10 gun trucks, but were repelled by gallant troops on Sunday.

Confirming the incident, yesterday, in Damaturu, the village head, Mai Modu Hassan, disclosed that insurgents engaged the soldiers with a fierce gun battle that lasted for half an hour.

"We were forced, along with our families, to flee into nearby bushes for safety," he lamented, adding that soldiers asked the residents not to panic, as they repelled the terrorists towards the forest.

**T**O tackle insecurity, especially in the education sector, government must provide sustainable solutions to the causes, former Minister of Education, Prof. Ruqayyatu Rufai, has said.