

# Niger: Armed bandits invade two local councils, kill four military officers

From Bala Yahaya, Minna

ARMED bandits have killed four military officers, including a major, during an attack on four communities in Paikoro and Munya Local Councils of Niger State. The Guardian learnt that the bandits, who launched the attack on Wednesday at Beni community in Munya council, abducted 20 persons mostly women and children as well as killed the village head, Alhaji Salihu Ahmed, when they sighted him on

his way back from the farm.

The gunmen also gunned down a medical personnel, Joshua Bitrus, at Adunu community in Paikoro council, when he attempted to escape into the bush on sighting the bandits.

They also abducted over 40 people, including women, children and a retired police officer, Moses Tanko.

A source close to the communities said the bandits, who carried out the acts in broad daylight at about

2:00p.m., set free those who could afford between N10,000 and N20,000 cash, regardless of either old or new naira notes.

"The bandits raided house to house, dispossessing people of their money, foodstuffs and other valuables," the source said.

The Guardian gathered that the bandits, after raiding the communities on their escape route, ran into an ambush by the Joint Security Task Force at Sarkin Pawa in Kaduna

State, where gun battle ensued, leading to killing of some bandits, while, others escaped into the forest with bullet wounds.

Four members of the Joint Security Task Force, including a major, and a local vigilante lost their lives, while others, who sustained injuries are being treated at an undisclosed government health facility in Minna, the state capital.

It was also learnt that two patrol vehicles belonging to the



Gen. Irabor

Joint Security Task Force were vandalised by the bandits with the windcreens and tires shattered with bullets.

Although the state's Police Command was yet to issue a statement on the latest attacks, the state's Commissioner for Internal Security and Humanitarian Affairs, Emmanuel Umar, said he was aware of the incident, but was yet to get the details of the attacks. He promised to issue a statement to that effect. Recall that six communities in Mashegu, Rafi and Wushishi local councils of the state were recently attacked by bandits.