

Katsina killings: Group calls for investigation, reorientation on self-defence

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The National Coalition Against Mass Killings, Mob Action, Extra-Judicial Killings and Impunity has condemned a violent incident in Kurfi Local Council of Katsina State, where villagers reportedly killed scores of alleged bandits and kidnappers.

In a statement, the group acknowledged the deep pain and trauma inflicted by criminal elements on rural communities across Nigeria but emphasised that self-defence must not devolve into mob vengeance or barbarism.

The coalition expressed concern over reports that civilians not only engaged in retaliatory killings but also mutilated and dismembered corpses, actions it said violated Nigerian laws and international human rights principles.

It reiterated that while self-defence is recognised under Section 33 of the Nigerian Constitution, it must be reasonable, necessary, and proportionate. The group added that the brutal and dehumanising treatment of alleged criminals undermines Nigeria's collective humanity and the rule of law.

The coalition criticised the failure of state security institutions to act effectively and justly, noting that this failure has eroded trust and led civilians to take the law into their own hands. It called on the Nigeria Police and other security agencies to prioritise their responsibility to protect lives and property.

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The group urged the Inspector-General of Police to investigate the breakdown of order in Kurfi and to ensure that the incident is thoroughly examined. It stressed the need for communities to be educated on the legal and moral limits of self-defence, stating that a society governed by law cannot permit vigilante justice to spiral into unchecked violence.

It appealed for respect for human life, even in the face of provocation, as a cornerstone of civil society. The coalition called for an independent investigation into the Kurfi killings and the alleged crimes of the suspected bandits or kidnappers.

It noted that if individuals are found culpable, they must face justice through lawful prosecution, not jungle justice.

The group pledged to monitor the situation closely and urged the National Human Rights Commission, the Ministry of Justice, civil society organisations, and the Katsina State Government to join in demanding accountability, reorientation, and reform.