

Soldiers, Policemen, Workers Killed As Bandits Attack Niger Mining Site

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A yet to be ascertained number of security personnel, including soldiers, policemen,

● Chinese Nationals Abducted ● Gunmen
Attack Checkpoint In Enugu, Kill Two Policemen
and workers lost their lives Government Area of Niger
when bandits in their numbers State.
invaded a mining site in
Ajata-Aboki in Shiroro Local
The attack was reportedly

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launched on Wednesday afternoon.

The invaders, armed with highly sophisticated weapons including AK-47, were said to have attacked the mining facility said to belong to and managed by Chinese nationals few days after they returned to the site for business.

The armed bandits were said to have abducted a yet to be ascertained number of persons, including Chinese nationals.

Eyewitness account said they split themselves into two groups with one group headed straight to the facility while the second group laid ambush against possible intruders.

While the team that headed to the mining site shot sporadically into the air before abducting their victims, the back-up team laid ambush and attacked a team of joint security personnel on a res-

cue mission to the facility leading to the death of unspecified number of soldiers, policemen and civilians.

The eyewitness from the area told *Daily Independent* on phone that, "About 11 people including seven mobile policemen attached to the mining site providing security cover for the expatriates and six civilians were gruesomely murdered when they ran into their ambush".

Meanwhile, the Niger State government confirmed the attack on the mining site at Ajata-Aboki village, Erena Ward in Shiroro Local Government Area of the state by armed bandits but said the number of casualties was yet to be ascertained.

The state Commissioner for Internal Security and Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Emmanuel Umar, confirmed the attack in a statement made available to journalists, add-

ing that a joint security team was mobilised to the scene in response to a distress call.

The commissioner, who, however, said the details of the attack and the number of casualties was yet unknown said, "The joint security team engaged the terrorists, the number of casualties were yet to be determined from both sides.

"It is also not clear the number of workers in the mining site as at the time of the attack including two Chinese nationals were reported to have been abducted", the commissioner said, adding that while some of the armed bandits were neutralised and victims rescued, the reinforced security forces mobilised and are on the trail of the remaining terrorists.

Among those that sustained various degrees of injuries, including undisclosed number of security personnel,

the commissioner explained, are responding to treatment at an undisclosed government owned medical facility.

While commiserating with the heads of security agencies in the state and their families over the loss of their personnel and loved ones, the state government, according to the statement, assured the families that their sacrifices will not go in vain.

Sani Yusuf Kokki, Co-Convener, Concerned Shiroro Youths, also said that unspecified number of Chinese nationals were kidnapped, describing the attack as terrific and terrible.

He lamented that "kidnap for ransom has become common phenomenon in our localities. It is quite unfortunate that we have been forced to coexist with this sad reality. We are being killed, maimed, raped

among other inhuman subjugations by marauding terrorists."

He added, "These rampaging terrorists attack their victims at will, ironically and unfortunately in some cases without slightest hindrance, resistance or confrontation from the conventional security. Sadly too, defenceless, unarmed and peaceful locals have crassly been abandoned to their fate thereby compelling them to wallow in perpetual agony and misery."

Gunmen Attack Checkpoint In Enugu, Kill Two Policemen

Similarly, two policemen were shot dead on Thursday morning when gunmen attacked a checkpoint around Gariki area in Enugu.

An eyewitness account stated that there was exchange of fire between the policemen and the gunmen,

noting that the attack eventually killed two policemen.

He said, "The masked gunmen arrived at MTD area, at Gariki roundabout and started shooting sporadically, a situation that caused pandemonium in the area as people ran helter-skelter for safety."

When contacted, the Police Public Relations Officer of the State Command, Daniel Ndukwe, said, "There was an attack on policemen on stop and search duty this morning, along Agbani Road, close to Enugu/Port-Harcourt Expressway, by yet-to-be identified hoodlums.

"However, details of the incident are still sketchy, while the Command's Tactical/Operational Operatives have been mobilized and are on the trail of the miscreants. Further development will be communicated, please," he said.