

Amid Renewed Attacks: Villagers Mobilise, Kill 50 Bandits In Self-defence

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A local vigilante group at Ibbi town in Niger State has taken the battle to the invaders of the community, killing no fewer than 50 bandits who had been terrorising and kidnapping its residents for ransom.

LEADERSHIP learned that the vigilantes launched the attack on the bandits and destroyed their camps at the bottom of a mountain within Kainji National Park, following the abduction of 12 people from the community about two weeks ago.

A source from the community said the vigilante group, with support from their colleagues from Niger South, went after the bandits in a raid that started from four days to yesterday. During the raid, the vigilantes were said to have lost two of their men, while the bandits killed nine of the 12 people in the captivity.

Among the nine killed was a Sharia Court registrar abducted around Ibbi in Mashegu local government area of Niger State.

The source said, "While the bandits were waiting to receive the ransom on the 12 people they had abducted, the vigilantes struck, killing no fewer than 50 of the bandits. Annoyed by the attack, the bandits killed nine (of their hostages) and three others escaped unhurt."

"Among those killed was the registrar of the Sharia Court in Ibbi; about six women and three men, but three other men were



IGP Baba

able to escape from the bandits. As I am talking to you now, the vigilantes have destroyed their camps and chased them out of the national park."

He added that the vigilantes dumped the bodies of the bandits at the Kainji National Park.

A resident of Ibbi, Abdul Ahmed, told LEADERSHIP that some bandits had recently taken over some unmanned parts of the National Park, from where they launched attacks on the people of the area.

He said the incessant attacks prompted the vigilante groups

of Operation Whirl Punch preferred anonymity, confirmed that vigilantes were engaged in complementary operations in and around Ibbi and the National Park area.

The officer said that, as usual, the police would usually provide cover for the vigilante during such operations, which was what they did in Ibbi.

Meanwhile, in Kaduna State, bandits have killed nine villagers, including four local vigilantes, at the Sabon Layi community of Birnin Gwari Local government area of Kaduna State.

The bandits were said to have stormed the area in large numbers, shooting sporadically and killing nine persons before abducting over 20 others and rustling several animals.

But in swift response to this attack, the Air Component of Operation Whirl Punch yesterday neutralised some of the fleeing bandits in Sabon Layi village in Birnin Gwari local government area of Kaduna State.

The commissioner for internal security and home affairs, in a statement, said at about 9:44am yesterday, the ministry received a distress call of bandits attacking Sabon Layi village.

He said the bandits were shooting, rustling cattle, looting property and committing other heinous crimes, a situation which sent residents scampering for safety.

Aruwan explained that immediately the Air Component

was contacted for action, the unit mobilised promptly to the location. According to him, on arrival at Sabon Layi, a thorough scan revealed normal human activities at the reported location.

"However, about four kilometres North of Sabon Layi village, the bandits were sighted fleeing for cover from the aircraft. They were engaged and neutralised in several passes. No further movement was observed after the strike.

The aircraft sustained its presence overhead before withdrawing," Aruwan said.

The statement said while the government awaits a formal report on the initial attack in Sabon Layi village, Kaduna State Governor Nasir El-Rufai has praised the Air Component for the prompt action in neutralising the fleeing bandits.

It would be recalled that acting on credible intelligence, troops of 'Operation Forest Sanity' under 1 Division, Nigerian Army, ambushed and neutralised a notorious bandit leader, Isiya Danwasa, and one of his cohorts.

It was gathered that the bandit leader had sent one of his errand boys, Yunusa, to procure some arms and ammunition in Kaduna town.

The 1 Division Nigerian Army spokesperson, Lieutenant Colonel Musa Yahaya, revealed in a statement yesterday that, subsequently, Yunusa was trailed and picked up by plain clothes soldiers and later used him to lure two of the bandit leaders to a pre-selected ammunition collection point.

Points At Issue

1 Amid the rising insecurity in the country, especially in the North Central and North West, some villagers led by vigilantes, have killed no fewer than 50 bandits.

2 A local vigilante group at Ibbi town in Niger State reportedly took the battle to the invaders of the community, who had been terrorising and kidnapping the residents for ransom.

3 While the bandits were waiting to receive the ransom on the 12 people they had abducted, the vigilantes struck, killing no fewer than 50 of the bandits.

4 Annoyed by the attack, the bandits in turn killed nine of their hostages and three others escaped unhurt.