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Gunmen kill 22, abduct 20 in Niger attack

•Govt calls for calm •50 bandits arrested, 220 cows recovered in Katsina

THE intervention of policemen prevented what the Emir of Kagara in Niger State called "a disaster" when a large number of suspected bandits attacked the community late Wednesday.

The assailants surrounded Kagara, headquarters of Rafi Local Government Area of the state. *The Nation* gathered.

Police engaged them in a shootout, killing six of the bandits, commissioner of police Adamu Usman said yesterday, adding that a policeman and four other persons were killed by the bandits.

In Dukku, another community in the council area, 17

From Justina Asishana,
Minna, From Augustine
Okezie, Katsina

vigilante members were killed by bandits, who abducted 20 persons in the community.

In the attack on Kagara, gunshots could be heard from a distance which caused motorists plying the Minna-Kontagora Road to keep away.

According to sources, the gunmen stormed the town at about 4:00 pm shooting into the air and moved from shop to shop dispossessing the people of their belongings.

The bandits also stormed a first generation bank in the

town.

Initial reports indicated that the criminals forced their way into the bank as the bank staff were preparing to close for the day, killing a policeman and a bank security personnel at the bank premises before moving into the bank to cart away the unspecified sum of money.

But the police chief said the assailants were prevented from entering the bank.

Usman did say three other persons were also killed by the bandits.

The attacks triggered protests by youths, who said government had failed to protect them.

Governor Abubakar Sani Bello called for calm, assuring the youths that adequate resources were being deployed to ensure their safety.

In Katsina, police said they killed over 50 bandits and recovered about 220 rustled animals.

Police commissioner Sanusu Buba Sanusi told reporters that many weapons and motorcycles belonging to the bandits were equally recovered.

The military also continued its onslaught against violent criminals in the Northwest of the country, recording successes in the operations, it was said.

