

Soldiers, policemen killed in attacks on checkpoints

- Three Customs men die
- Bandits kill doctor in attack on Kaduna church
- Boko Haram hits Borno town
- Sect beheads teacher, preaches in Geidam

Mike Odiegwu, Port Harcourt;
AbdulGafar Alabelewe, Kaduna; Justina
Asishana, Minna; Gbenga Omokhunu, Abuja

THE attacks on police assets and killing of policemen and other security operatives in the Southeast in the last three months, at the weekend spread to Rivers State.

Multiple attacks on security checkpoints between Omagwa/Isiokpo/Elele Owerri Road led to the killing of soldiers, policemen and Customs men.

In Kaduna, a doctor was killed and four others abducted in church.

There was another mass abduction in Niger State, with 35 people kidnapped at the weekend.

Three military personnel; two policemen and three Customs Service officials were

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• One of the checkpoints after the attack in Rivers...yesterday

Naira falls on back of rising food inflation

By Collins Nweze

FEARS of continued rise in inflation among foreign exchange dealers have further weakened the naira, market statistics have shown.

The local currency lost strength at the weekend, dropping to N485/\$1 from N483/\$1 at the parallel market.

The slide followed release of March inflation figure by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), which showed that Nigeria's main price index jumped to 18.17 per cent in March from 17.33 per cent in February.

Food inflation spiked to 22.95 per cent in March

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killed in the Rivers attack. Some of them were beheaded with others burnt beyond recognition.

Rivers State Governor Nyesom Wike ordered security agencies to arrest the gunmen described by the Police as members of the proscribed Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB).

It was gathered that the gunmen numbering 70, entered Omagwa and Elele through the Imo State border.

At about 8 p.m. on Saturday, they launched the attacks on four checkpoints between Elele and Omagwa in Ikwerre local government area.

One of the attacked checkpoints located along Airport Road, Omagwa, was manned by Joint Task Force (JTF) operatives made up of nine policemen and two soldiers.

Two burnt bodies of security operatives were recovered at the JTF checkpoint.

The bandits, who stole a rifle, later invaded the checkpoint of the Nigeria Customs Service at Isiokpo, killing three customs officials. They carted away their rifles and two patrol vans.

They attacked the Police Area Command at Isiokpo but were repelled by policemen on duty.

Police spokesman in Rivers, Nnamdi Omoni confirmed the attacks on the checkpoints.

He said: "I can confirm the attack on security personnel on the Omagwa/Isiokpo/Elele Owerri Road. "A full-scale investigation has been launched into the dastardly attacks with a view to arresting the perpetrators and bringing them to justice."

*Wike orders perpetrators arrest

Governor Wike, in a statement by his Special Assistant (Media), Kelvin Ebiri, "condemned the barbaric and dastardly attacks" on the security personnel and ordered the arrest of the gunmen.

The governor said there was no justification for such heinous and condemnable attacks targeted at innocent security personnel on legitimate duty.

He said: "The government of Rivers State is saddened by the unwarranted callous attack on security personnel. We offer our sympathies to the relatives of those who lost their lives in the attacks.

"We condemn this heinous act, share the grief of the security agencies, and convey our sincere condolences."

The All Progressives Congress (APC) in the state also condemned the killings, saying the attackers were evil-minded cowards.

The party urged "all Nigerians to unite against the actions of all known separatists across the country who are determined to tear us apart, not by the force of reason, but by acts of terrorism."

*Bandits kill doctor, abduct four in Kaduna church

Dr. Zechariah Dogonyaro and another worshipper, were shot dead inside Haske Baptist Church, Manini in Chikun council area of Kaduna State by bandits who also abducted four others yesterday.

Security reports indicated that eight others were killed in different attacks on Birnin Gwari, Kachia, and Igabi councils.

One of the deceased was seven-year-old Abubakar Musa, whose partially burnt body was found in an uncompleted building.

The Commissioner for Internal Security and Home Affairs, Samuel Aruwan, confirmed the incidents in a statement.

The statement said: "Governor Nasir El-Rufai roundly denounced the attack on the church in Chikun LGA as a shocking act of depraved persons far-removed from humanity.

"The governor added that attacking innocent worshipers who were exercising their natural and lawful right to assemble in worship represented the worst kind of evil.

"He sent heartfelt condolences to the families of the deceased and to the Haske Baptist Church. He prayed for the repose of the souls of the slain in all the attacks. He also wished the injured victim a speedy recovery.

"In other reports received from security agencies, armed bandits invaded Bagoma village, Birnin Gwari LGA and killed six persons, listed as Bala Gwamna, Kasage Ali, Mai Jakkai, Makeri Kugu, Haruna Kawu and Ali Agaji.

"Also reported was an attack by armed bandits at Amfu village in Kachia LGA, in which one Mrs Rahila Dauda was shot dead.

"Finally, the partially burnt corpse of a seven-year-old, Abubakar Sarki Musa was found in an uncompleted building in Hayin Danmani area, Rigasa, Igabi council."

*Bandits have hijacked Nigeria, Kaduna Christians lament

The Kaduna State chapter of

the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) lamented the attack on Haske Baptist Church, saying bandits and kidnappers hijacked Nigeria, especially the state.

In a statement by its Secretary, Rev. Caleb Ma'aji, CAN asked the government to act quickly before Nigerians resorted to self-help.

It said any government that is unable to guarantee the safety of her citizens and their properties could best be termed a failed government.

CAN said: "Our hearts are saddened over the sorry see security situation in our dear state (Kaduna State). It has grown so unfortunate and on a daily basis continues to grow worst with no appreciable resistance given the unholy terrorists who have continued to hold our dear state and nation to ransom.

"Today (yesterday), innocent worshipers were attacked, a medical doctor and one other person killed and many members injured were taken into captivity.

"This is happening in a nation that her constitution allows freedom of religion yet this freedom is not guaranteed. CAN Kaduna State continue to wonder about the crime of innocent citizens. How come the terrorist appear more free and protected than the citizens?"

Also yesterday, the Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria (HURIWA) blamed President Muhammadu Buhari's administration for the continuous invasion of schools and churches by bandits and terrorists.

*35 abducted in Niger

Thirty-five people were on

Saturday kidnapped and many others injured by bandits at Chiri, Gini, and Fuka communities in Shiroro and Munya council area of Niger State.

These incidents happened barely 48 hours after Deputy Governor Ahmed Mohammad Ketso visited an Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp in Gwada, Shiroro council where he said that prayers were needed to overcome the continuous attacks by bandits.

Chairman of the Niger Concern Citizens, Muhammad Wana, revealed the latest attacks via radio programme monitored in Minna.

He said: "35 persons were kidnapped by armed bandits on Saturday in Chiri and Fuka in Shiroro council areas. Many who ran into the bush are still missing."

Wana added that 10 out of 15 wards in Shiroro council are currently under the control of bandits, adding that Gwada, Kuta and Sarkin Pawa in Shiroro and Munya Local Government area have become headquarters of persons displaced by bandits.

He added that eight of the wards which are under bandits control are in riverine areas and host about 80,000 IDPs.

The Co-convenor of Concerned Shiroro Youths, Sani Abubakar Kokki, also confirmed the attacks on Gini, Fuka, and Chiri. He said that in Chiri, there was mass abduction of the villagers.

He also said that some people sustained gunshot injuries while many houses were burnt.

Deputy Governor Ketso had during his visit to the IDP camp at Gwada on Friday said that the security challenge in the state was overwhelming.