

Soldiers, 10 policemen, others killed in gunmen attacks

- Niger mining site, Enugu, Rivers checkpoints attacked
- Four Chinese, others abducted
- Governors order manhunt for assailants
- Army confirms killings

From Justina Asishana, Minna;
Damian Duruiheoma, Enugu; Mike Odiegwu,
Port Harcourt and AbdulGafar Alabelewe, Kaduna

GUNMEN went on a killing spree in different parts of the country yesterday, leaving many deaths in their trail. The bodies of 30 soldiers were allegedly evacuated following a terrorist attack on Ajata-Aboki Mining Site in Shiroro Local Government Area of Niger State.

The military confirmed the killing of a number of its personnel, but did not give the figure.

In a statement last night, the Director, Army Public Relations, Brig.-Gen. Onyema Nwachukwu, said the troops were ambushed by the terrorists, while responding to a distress call from a village that was under attack.

Seven not policemen and two civilians were confirmed killed in the attack.

Four Chinese workers were abducted, but the number of abducted workers remained unknown.

In Enugu State, two policemen were feared killed by gunmen who attacked a checkpoint in the Garki area of the state capital.

Also yesterday, the police in Rivers State confirmed that an Assistant Superintendent



• President Muhammadu Buhari (middle); Minister of Foreign Affairs Geoffrey Onyeama (left); Nigerians in Diaspora Commission Chairman Mrs. Abike Dabiri-Erewa (right) and Mrs. Francesca Agunlonye and her children — Francesca, Michelle and Arrabel — during a meeting with Nigerians in Portugal...yesterday

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Buhari cautions Diaspora Nigerians against inciting people at home

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•From left: DG/CEO, Sir Ahmadu Bello Memorial Foundation, Abubakar Umar; Chairman, Board of Trustees (BOT), Dr Muazu Babagida Aliyu, FCT Minister, Malam Muhammad Musa Bello, BOT Secretary, Mallam Ibrahim Shekarau during the visit of the Sir Ahmadu Bello Memorial Foundation delegation to the FCTA in Abuja...yesterday

Many soldiers, 10 policemen, others killed in gunmen attacks

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3 of Police (ASP), Chris Josiah, was killed by five gunmen in Ovigbo Local Government Area.

Bandits continued to hold sway in Kaduna State. A community leader in Birnin-Gwari, Alhaji Zubairu Jdris Abdulla'uf, lamented that farming communities in the council paid over N300 million as taxes to terrorists in two years.

4 Bloody day in Niger The Niger killings occurred at the mining site in Ajata-Aboki in Gurmana Ward of Shiroo Local Government.

Spokesperson of the Coalition of Shiroo Associations, Salis Sabo, said the bodies of 30 soldiers were recovered.

The Nigerian Army said that a number of personnel paid the supreme price when troops ran into an ambush in Shiroo Local Government Area of Niger State.

The riot policemen were attached to the site to provide security for the expatriate workers.

Many sustained gunshot injuries during the attack in which four Chinese nationals were abducted. The terrorists, armed with sophisticated weapons, were said to have invaded the mining site, shooting at everyone in sight.

The Niger State Commissioner for Internal Security and Humanitarian Affairs, Emmanuel Umar, confirmed the abduction of four Chinese nationals.

He said a joint security team was mobilised to the scene in response to a distress call.

The joint security team engaged the terrorists and they were yet to determine the number of casualties from both sides.

"However, a yet to be ascertained number of workers in the mining site, including four Chinese nationals were reported to have been abducted.

"Security forces were reinforced for the manhunt of the remaining terrorists as some of them were neutralised and rescue of the injured victims, including security personnel," he said.

The commissioner said those injured had been evacuated to government hospitals. Governor Abubakar Sani Bello ordered a manhunt for the terrorists.

Condemning the attack, he said: "This is really disturbing, especially as the state has been relatively peaceful with only pockets of attacks being recorded as compared to some time past.

"It really saddened my heart to hear about this. It is even more worrisome to know that the lives of security personnel were involved and expatriates were also among those kidnapped."

The governor commiserated with heads of the security agencies that are part of the joint operatives in the state for the loss of their personnel.

He sympathised with the families of slain security agents, assuring

Army confirms killing of personnel in Niger

From Okodili Ndili, Abuja

THE Nigerian Army has confirmed that a number of personnel paid the supreme price when troops ran into an ambush in Shiroo Local Government Area of Niger State. It however said there was no attack on any critical national infrastructure as reported in some section of the media.

In a statement last night, the Director, Army Public Relations, Brig.-Gen. Onyema Nwachukwu, explained that the troops were ambushed by the terrorists, while responding to a distress call from a village that was under attack.

It was reported that soldiers and policemen were among those killed and four Chinese were abducted by the terrorists who attacked a mining site in Ajata community.

But the army spokesman in the statement, narrated: "On Wednesday 29 June 2022, troops of the Nigerian Army (NA) deployed in Shiroo general area responded to a distress call of bandits attack on people operating a mining site. Enroute the location, the troops ran into an ambush staged by the criminal elements.

"Sadly, a number of personnel paid the supreme

price in fierce firefight that ensued. Subsequently, the location has been reinforced and troops are on the trail of the criminals with some already neutralised. The GOC 1 Division has moved to the location to take charge of the follow-up operations.

"The NA notes that some clips of the incident have surfaced online and wish to encourage well-meaning Nigerians to exercise some restraint in posting images of such occurrence, mindful that our brothers and sisters who may have lost their breadwinners deserve to be properly notified and not to get such information via the media. We mention this, mindful of the inalienable rights of citizens to use the social media which is respected.

"It is also necessary to clarify that activities of the criminals was not on any critical national asset or infrastructure. Furthermore, the NA calls on all Nigerians to continue to support the efforts of their military personnel who continue to confront the enemies of our dear nation."

ing them that the sacrifices of their loved ones will not go in vain. Bello commended the bravery of those who engaged the terrorists in a gunfight.

He appealed to the country personnel not to be discouraged but to remain committed to discharging their duties and ensuring the safe return of the four Chinese nationals and the abducted persons.

The governor prayed for the safe return of those kidnapped.

2 Gunmen attack policemen in Enugu At least two policemen were killed in the Enugu attack.

It was feared that there was a heavy shooting at the popular MTD junction in Akwuke as the operatives engaged the gunmen in a shootout.

The attack occurred at about 10.30am, forcing motorists to take refuge in the Gariki Park.

The state police command said its operatives were on the trail of the hoodlums.

The spokesman, Daniel Nduke, said the operatives were on stop-and-search when they were attacked.

He said: "There was an attack on policemen on stop and search duty this morning along Aebani Road, close to Enugu/Port-Harcourt Expressway, by yet-to-be identified hoodlums."

"However, details of the incident are still sketchy, while Command's Tactical/Operational Operatives have been mobilised and are on the trail of the miscreants."

The statement was silent on the number of casualties.

However, sources in the area said that at least two policemen were feared killed during the attack.

How five gunmen killed our officer The Rivers police command, in a statement by its spokesman, Grace Iringe Koko, said five masked gunmen shot dead the victim along Assemblies of God Church, Obeama Community,

Oyigbo. She said Josiah was killed in his Sports Utility Vehicle while returning from work on Tuesday.

The Commissioner of Police has ordered a massive deployment of personnel across Oyigbo Local Government Area of Rivers State to fish out criminal elements and perpetrators of violent crimes against the good people of the area.

"This is coming on the heels of the gruesome murder of an Assistant Superintendent of Police, Chris Josiah, attached to Afam Divisional Police Headquarters in the evening of 28th June 2022, while returning home after work."

The deceased officer was ambushed by five yet-to-be-identified armed masked men, who opened fire at the Officer along the Assemblies of God Church, Obeama Community, Oyigbo, and shot him dead inside his Lexus RX 300 SUV.

The Commissioner of Police has equally ordered a full-scale investigation into the incident with a view to unraveling the remote and immediate cause of the attack and bringing the perpetrators to justice.

He strictly warns that further attacks on police officers tasked with the protection of lives and property will not be tolerated by the Police authority."

Bandits rule in Kaduna Alhaji Abdulla'uf, who was Managing Director of the Kaduna State Media Corporation (KSMC), lamented the rule by bandits in his Kaduna community.

He said the community has paid over N300 million taxes to bandits in two years.

He told reporters that the incessant attacks on his people had paralysed economic activities and made traveling in the area so difficult or even impossible in some places.

He said: "We have reached the point of no return. People are being pushed to the wall."

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"It is also necessary to clarify that activities of the criminals was not on any critical national asset or infrastructure. Furthermore, the NA calls on all Nigerians to continue to support the efforts of their military personnel who continue to confront the enemies of our dear nation."

"Randegi is one of the areas where these bandits have their routes through Zamfara State to Niger State.

Yesterday (Wednesday), the people of Randegi confronted these bandits who tried to overrun the farming community and they succeeded in dislodging them.

"So, I think our people are now ready if the government cannot perform its constitutional function."

The community leader, a former broadcaster with DW Radio, said the bandits have for over two years, imposed taxes on the Birnin-Gwari farmers.

He said: "Yes, N200 million was paid to bandits in Randegi District alone."

"When you talk of Birnin-Gwari Local Government as a whole, it is between N300 million to N400 million paid to these bandits."

"There are three stages of paying taxes to these bandits.

You have to pay pre-season and mid-season when the crops are about to start yielding, otherwise, you won't have access to your farm."

"Then, at the end of the season when you are harvesting, you will give these bandits money before you access your farm."

"And when you access your farm after paying these taxes, they will now tell you that apart from giving them money, you will give a ratio of two bags of every 10 bags of all the assorted grains you harvest."

He added: "For the past three years, this is what Birnin-Gwari people have been enduring and we are now in a state of hopelessness and frustration."

"When people are frustrated, they will look for the best option for themselves, which is to arm themselves if the government cannot protect them."

"We are living in a situation where people can no longer work or even travel one kilometre from Birnin-Gwari town to other areas and it is the same thing that we have in all the districts in Birnin-Gwari."

Investors gained N4.75tr in six months

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tively better inflation-hedging instruments, with positive nominal return. Inflation rate is currently at 17.71 per cent. The benchmark interest rate stands at 13 per cent.

The All Share Index (ASI) - the common value-based index that tracks all share prices at the NGX, closed yesterday at 51,817.59 points as against its opening index of 42,716.44 points, an increase of 21.31 per cent.

Aggregate market capitalisation of all quoted equities meanwhile rose by 25.29 per cent or N5.638 trillion from opening value of N22.297 trillion to close at N27.935 trillion.

The difference between the ASI return and increase in aggregate market capitalisation was due to additional listing of shares during the period. The ASI is generally regarded as the sovereign equities index for Nigeria, the barometer for gauging the Nigerian stock market.

Market analysts attributed the market performance to steady and stable positive results of quoted companies in 2021 and first quarter 2022.

Most quoted companies had declared considerable dividends with dividend yields touching double-digit in many instances, in contrast to depressed yields in fixed income market.

Analysts at Cordros Securities Limited noted that the equities market kicked off the year on an impressive note and was able to sustain the rally till the end of the half of the year.

"While emerging and frontier markets have benefited by the impact of policy normalisation and inflationary pressures occasioned by the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the performance of the Nigerian financial market has been relatively strong. At the same time, the volatility in the fixed income market has also been uncharacteristically muted," Cordros stated.

The analysts said the equities market resilience was also due to foreign exchange liquidity which led to limited inflows from investors and resulted in the market being dominated by domestic investors. Foreign investors' inability to repatriate funds also led to the re-invest-

VP slot: Northwest APC governors, ministers to lobby Tinubu

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elections.

"Therefore, the zone resolved to aggregate its interests and vital concerns and engage accordingly with the presidential candidate of the party."

He added: "The meeting welcomed the initiative to commence this consultative meeting as vital for strengthening the APC in the North-West and improve leadership engagements and cohesion within the zone."

Lukman said participants received the zonal report from the National Vice Chairman (North-West) and reviewed the state of the party at the national level and within the zone. The zonal meeting welcomed the successful conclusion of primaries at the state and national levels.

They also acknowledged the challenges facing some state chapters of the party and resolved to promote efforts at reconciliation as an urgent priority.

He added: "Participants requested the National Vice Chairman (North-West) to ensure that the consultative meet-

ment of dividends in the market.

According to them, the factors that had led to resilient market performance so far will sustain the market in the second half of the year.

They projected that the market performance would be far more resilient than in other pre-election years when market performance was pressured as investors' consternation rose.

The analysts said: "This prognosis is based on the market being dominated by domestic investors and expectation that corporate earnings will remain resilient despite external concerns around global growth and internal concerns around spiralling inflation and the attendant impact on costs."

"Considering all the issues, our baseline expectation is that the market will remain resilient in second half 2022, and the return will settle at 27.0 per cent by 2022 full year."

Managing Director, ARM Securities Limited, Mr. Rotimi Olubi, said improved participation by local investors in the market has been major boost as foreign investors maintain the sidelines.

"Strong earnings from some stocks in the consumer goods and industrial goods as well as some banks also buoyed investor sentiment," Olubi said.

Vice President, Highcap Securities Limited, David Adonri said the first half 2022 performance was heartwarming as Nigeria outperformed all other African markets.

According to him, the market had a 2021 full year and first quarter 2022 results.

He attributed the growth to the rising crude oil price also enhanced performance of equities. He added that the market slowed down in June due to unfavorable domestic factors which the rising crude oil market could not offset.

"These were the rising inflation rate, hike in interest rate and excruciating energy crisis. As the political risk associated with the 2023 general election heightens and possibility of further hike in interest rate looms, economic fundamentals may not be strong enough to engender further market growth in second half 2022," Adonri said.

ing is sustained as a vital tool for cohesion within the party."

Region important to ruling party's victory

Lukman said the party cannot win next year's election without Northwest, which is the backbone of the party.

He, however, expressed the optimism that the Northwest zone will give APC victory.

He said if the party fails to win the zone, it will lose the presidency.

Lukman said: "We will work hand in hand with all states chapters in the zone as part of efforts in creating awareness and sensitizing the members in the zone."

According to him: "This is important in view of the fact that Northwest is the backbone of APC. Once we deliver the zone, we are sure of victory because the zone is the heart beat of Politics in the country."

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