

Over 100 feared killed in Zamfara, Kaduna

From Attahiru Ahmed and Muhammad Sabiu with agency report

OVER 100 people are feared killed during bandits' attacks in Zamfara and Kaduna communities.

In Zamfara, about 10 soldiers, 68 villagers and scores of bandits were killed in Mutunji village of Dansadau emirate in Maru Local Government Area following gun duel between soldiers and bandits.

One of the victims who is now receiving treatment at the Yarima Bakura Hospital in Gusau, Shehu Mohammed, told the *Nigerian Tribune* that soldiers were on their way to Mutunji village to assist the Nigeria Air Force personnel who were bombing bandits, not knowing that other bandits were hiding along the road.

According to Mohammed, immediately the bandits sighted the soldiers, they came out of their hiding and opened fire, killing about 10 of them on the spot.

He further explained that after the bandits had killed the

soldiers, they also set three vehicles ablaze and moved to Mutunji village looking for a hiding place after they sighted a fighter jet in the air.

He said: "Immediately the bandits sighted the fighter jet, they rushed to Mutunji village and hid in the market, where many people were at that time transacting businesses."

According to him, when the fighter jet reached Mutunji village, it started bombing, leading to the death of 68 villagers, while more than 40 were injured.

"They are currently receiving treatment at the Dansadau General Hospital, Yarima and Bakura Specialist Hospital in Gusau, while others are still at Mutunji village."

Another indigene of Mutunji village who narrowly escaped, Mallam Musa Abubakar, also explained that several bandits were killed by the Nigeria Air Force strikes in their hideouts, a situation which he said forced them to abandon their hideouts and escape to Mutunji village to hide within the community.

Also speaking another person who gave his name as Sa'idu Ishaka said he was in the market when the bomb

was dropped by the fighter jet, adding that he narrowly escaped being killed.

Ishaka, who was admitted at the Yarima Bakura Specialist Hospital, said that bandits, in their large numbers, entered their village and few minutes later, he noticed a fighter jet roaming in the air.

Nigerian Tribune correspondent who was at the Yariman Bakura Specialist Hospital saw the dead bodies of the 10 soldiers killed at the hospital mortuary.

It was gathered that the dead bodies were brought in an ambulance of Dansadau General Hospital accompanied by military personnel on Monday.

Confirming the gun battle, the state Commissioner for Security and Home Affairs, DIG Mamman Tsafe (retd), who visited the hospital to see the slain soldiers and those injured, described the incident as "most unfortunate."

He sympathised with the families of the soldiers and those injured.

He said: "The incident happened at a time when the security situation is said to be improving."

Meanwhile, about 37

people have been killed by bandits during fresh attacks in Kaura Local Government Area of Kaduna State.

The attacks took place separately on Sunday night at Malagum I and Sokwong communities of Kagoro Chiefdom.

Although police authorities are yet to confirm the incident, chairman of Kaura Local Government Area, Honourable Atuk Stephen, told Channels Television that the bandits carried out the coordinated attacks at about 11:00p.m.

Stephen added that the bandits razed over 100 houses and destroyed several vehicles and motorcycles during the attacks.

According to him, all houses in Sokwong community were completely razed by the bandits, while the entire area has been deserted.

Meanwhile, military sources have reported to the state government the killing of several people, as well as burning down of houses in Kaura council area.

This was contained in a statement issued by the Commissioner for Internal Security and Home Affairs, Samuel

Aruwan, on Monday.

The statement reads: "Military and other security agencies reported that bandits attacked the locations and killed several citizens, while burning houses and other properties."

"Governor Nasir El-Rufai expressed deep sadness at the report of the incident and prayed for the repose of the souls of those killed, while offering condolences to their families."

"The governor condemned the attacks as inhuman, considering the efforts of government, security forces, traditional institution and other critical stakeholders within the last week."

"The governor has also directed the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) to urgently provide relief materials to the communities."

"An urgent security intervention is being conducted by the Defence Headquarters' Operation Safe Haven, as the Commander, also the GOC, 3 Division Nigerian Army, Major-General Ibrahim Ali, and Sector 7 Commander, Colonel Timothy Oporum, are presently in the locations."

"The Kaduna State government will make public further

details on the incident as it receives feedback from the security forces."

Meanwhile, the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Kaduna State chapter, has called on the Federal Government and security agencies not to allow the killers escape justice.

The association expresses pains over the death of the innocent defenceless people of the communities.

The state chairman of CAN, Reverend John Hayab, in a statement on Monday, condemned the killings by bandits on Sunday night.

Hayab said: "This massacre has further proven that the killers of the Southern Kaduna people have not yet been neutralised as claimed."

While calling on the Federal Government and security agencies not to allow the killers escape, he noted that those who committed the deadly act must be fished out, arrested, and brought to face justice no matter who is involved.

He noted that "These renewed killings may be a strategy to scare the people from exercising their rights and to further increase fear and impoverish them."