

A new terror group has emerged in the North Central part of Nigeria, leaving several feared dead.

Findings revealed that the members of group Known as Mahmuda, in recent times have been attacking communities around the Kainji Lake National Park (KLNP) unchallenged.

The national park is located in North Central Nigeria, spanning parts of Kwara and Niger, respectively.

According to findings, some affected communities are in Kaiama Local Government Area (Kemaanji, Tenebo, Baabete, Nuku, Nanu) and Barutein Local Government Area (villages in Yashikira District), both in Kwara State

It was further gathered that the group has also taken over communities in Babana and Wawa District in Borgu Local Government in Niger State

The Sunday Tribune learned that the militants attacked a vigilante group on Wednesday in Kemanji.

According to our source, “they called themselves Mahmuda group. Their leader in a voice note is threatening all the communities. They kill and kidnap victims and also demand ransom unchallenged

“The surge of insecurity in Nigeria has been a source of concern to the citizenry because of its destructive factor to livelihood, and unfortunately, new militant groups continue to emerge and occupy the ungoverned spaces in the country.

“With the Kainji Lake National Park left unguarded, the loggers, fishermen, and hunter groups take the opportunity and start enjoying the common good of the citizens for their personal gain

“At the beginning, there was a clash between the loggers and the militants as well as the vigilantes, but the loggers negotiated with the militants, and the loggers gained access to the forest to harvest trees without any hitches and this as well serves as the biggest opportunity for the militant to make money through the logging activities.

“Currently, the community of Kainji National Park (KLNP), which includes Kaiama LGA (Kemaanji, Tenebo, Baabete, Nuku, Nanu) and Barutein LGA (villages in Yashikira District that share a border with the park), all in Kwara State, part of Babana and Wawa District in Borgu LGA in Niger State, have been under siege for years, and the world does not know what is happening to the Borgawas (Borgu people).

“The militants occupied the park visibly over five years ago when they raided the park and chased the Range Guard out of the park.

“They migrated from Mokwa LGA when they were chased away by the then Governor of Niger State, Muazu Babangida Aliyu. He accused them of being members of Boko Haram.

“Upon their eviction from Mokwa Local Government Area, they relocated to a village called Welele in Kaiamab Area. The local government authority, with the collaboration of the security forces, forced them out of Kaiama Local Government Area Following their eviction from Kaiama, they relocated to the Kaduna State forest The same group, well-armed, resurfaced in the national park, and became a monster.

“Thus, who are these new militant groups? Some people claim that the militant group came from the Benin Republic or Niger Republic. This claim is also similar to a report from BBC Radio that there was an influx of militant groups to Kainji Lake National Park. Further study of them will reveal the true identity of this faceless group.

“However, a recent audiotape record from the militant claims to be a moderate Islamist, this assertion confirms that they are a sect of Boko haram that broke away from the Shekau-led

extremist group. Regrettably, the locals are gradually being recruited into their ranks as informants. They referred to themselves as the Mahmuda Group or Mallam Group, their leader's name, and a jihadist fighting to promote the cause of the Sunni group.

"The militant group mainly speaks Hausa. The saddened reality is that the activities of these militants, controlling a vast territory of 3970.29 sq. km of the Nigerian state, have resulted in the community members living at the mercy and dictates of the nonstate actor. Living at the mercy and dictates of the militants manifests in a number of ways.

"First, the herders within the park pay dues (zakah) to the militants to allow them to graze their cattle. Second, the farmers to whom the militant allocates farmland within the forest also pay farming levies to the militants. Third, the militants forced the residents to work on their farms as sadaka. Fourth, members of the community are kidnapped and made to pay ransom. Fifth, illegal mounting of roadblocks along the community, regulating social activities, particularly the sale of alcohol and all forms of smoking, and even settling disputes among the community's Members

"Sixth, the militants threaten the existence of herbalists that they assume are fortifying the community vigilante members to confront them.

Unconfirmed reports also have it that the Mahmuda Group or Mallam Group is into illegal mining in the park environment.

"In their ploy to deceive the people with religion, they timely gather community members to preach about Islamic ethics as well as persuade community members to be disloyal to the Nigerian state and also instruct that any disputes within the community must be reported to them.

However in a swift reaction to the development, the Defence Headquarters, DHQ, on Friday dismissed the existence of the new group

Director of Defence Media Operations, Major General Markus Kangye, stated that the group remained criminal under whatever guise and should be ready to face the gallant troops for the consequences of their actions

The DDMO who said that there was no cause for concern as the Military Troops were on the red alert to tackle the criminals professionally urged the members of the public to support and collaborate with the Armed forces of Nigeria AFN in the ongoing efforts to end insurgency activities in the country.