

Armed men on motorbikes kill 11, kidnap 70 in northwest Nigeria

ARMED men on motorbikes killed 11 people and kidnapped at least 70 others, including women and children, in a village in northwest Nigeria, witnesses said, in a region plagued by mass abductions and unrest.

The attackers opened fire as they rode into Sabongarin Damri in Zamfara State late on Saturday, resident Isa Sani told Reuters.

"They came on motorcycles, shooting randomly before abducting our daugh-

ters and children. As of today, we haven't heard anything from them. Everywhere is quiet," he said on Monday.

Group known locally as 'Bandits,' have killed hundreds of people and seized thousands across the state in recent years. They often hold captives for months and demand ransoms for their release.

Sufiyanu Ibrahim said the attackers kidnapped his wife and shot him in the leg.

"There were gunshots everywhere. I narrowly escaped. At least 11 people were killed," he said on phone.

Zamfara, which borders Niger, has become the epicentre of the violent attacks that have disrupted farming and travel and forced thousands to flee their homes.

Shehu Musa, the traditional chief of Sabongarin Damri village, confirmed that more than 60 people were taken, including

women and children.

Police arrested 2,109 people and freed 175 kidnap victims from suspected bandits in northwest and central regions from April to July, Lanre Issa-Onilu, the head of the government's National Orientation Agency (NOA), said on Monday. The agency did not provide comparative figures.

Zamfara police did not immediately respond to requests for comment about Saturday's attack.