

NEWS

# Gunmen attack Kogi community, kill 19

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File: Gunmen

## John Ameh and Gbenga Odogun with agency report

Suspected herdsmen on Thursday attacked Tawari community in Kogi State, killing no fewer than 19 people and burning homes.

The palace of the king was also razed.

Spokesman for the police in the state Williams Anya and the administrator of Local Government Area Musa Mohammed confirmed the incident in Lokoja on Friday.

Mohammed said the gangsters attacked the community at midnight.

He confirmed that 19 people were killed.

A resident of Tawari Mrs Comfort Solomon told the *News Agency of Nigeria* that the motorbike-riding gunmen numbering about 100 also attacked places of worship.

Solomon said, “The gunmen came into the community around 11.15pm when the villagers were sleeping.

“They killed more than 15 men. The attackers communicated with each other in Hausa.”

An indigene of the community Mrs Rita Nuhu, said her father’s house was razed during the attack.

She said, “My mother and her sister were ordered out of the house after which the house was set ablaze, while about 15 men were killed.

“We are calling on the security agencies to bring the perpetrators to justice. We appeal to the federal and state governments to come to our aid.”

The king of Tawari, Idris Yusuf, who also spoke to *NAN* on the telephone, confirmed the incident, saying it was the first time the community was experiencing such an attack.

He said, “This is the first time we are witnessing such a deadly attack. Our community has been very peaceful.”

According to an eyewitness, it was a revenge attack by the hoodlums following the alleged killing of four of their colleagues along the Lokoja-Abuja Expressway

recently by the police, following a tip-off by some Tawari vigilantes on suspicion they were kidnappers.

Meanwhile, the President, Major General Muhammadu Buhari (retd.), on Friday night condemned the killing of the villagers.

“There is no excuse or justification for killing innocent people by anybody or group, and for whatever motive,” Buhari was quoted in a statement by his media aide, Mr Garba Shehu.

He added, “The killings and revenge killings will only aggravate the cycle of violence, creating neither safety nor security for any side.

“People should avoid taking the law into their own hands because doing so could make a bad situation worse and undermine the government’s efforts to tackle the security challenges (facing the country).

“I am gravely worried about frequency and temptation of using violence to settle disputes instead of following lawful and amicable means to avoid needless destruction of lives and property.”

The attackers had also raised worship centres and the palace of the traditional ruler of Tawari, the Akuma of Tawari.

The spokesman of the state Police Command, Mr Williams Anya, had confirmed the attacks.

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