

## news

## 15 cops, five soldiers killed, governor says Abuja not safe

Samson Folarin, John Charles,  
Godwin Isenyo and  
Adeniyi Olugbeni

**T**HE spate of insecurity in the country assumed a more dangerous dimension on Monday as Boko Haram insurgents made inroads into Niger State and gunmen killed two students of Greenfield University in Kaduna state.

Also on Monday, the Vice-Chancellor of the Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi, Benue State, Professor Richard Kimbir, said kidnappers attacked the institution on Saturday night.

In Kebbi State, the police said nine of their personnel were killed by bandits in the Sakaba Local Government Area of the state.

**Boko Haram hosts flag in Niger village, seizes residents' wives, 50 communities deserted**

In Niger State, the state Governor, Sani Bello, in an interview with journalists on Monday, said Boko Haram terrorists had taken over a part of the state, hosting their flag in Kaure village from where they had made incursions into more than 50 villages.

He said Abuja was not safe with Boko Haram's presence in Niger State.

The governor lamented that over 50 villages, which were overrun by the terrorists and bandits, had been deserted by original inhabitants.

He said, "I am confirming that there are Boko Haram elements around Kaure in the Shiroro Local Government of Niger State. They have taken over the territory. They have hosted their flag. I am confirming to you now that they have taken over the wives of people

by force."

Bello, while describing the situation in the state as critical and pathetic, said over 3,000 villagers escaped to Minna on Sunday night alone, while several others were in camps in Gwada and other places.

"The majority of the displaced persons will have to remain in this camp in Minna because their villages have been taken over by Boko Haram terrorists and bandits. Their wives have been seized from them and forcefully attached to Boko Haram elements," he said.

He warned that the Boko Haram terrorists were trying to make Kaure their home and headquarters like they did in Sambisa forest, adding that while Sambisa forest is several kilometres away from Abuja, Kaure is only two hours drive to Abuja.

He explained that his administration had been asking the Federal Government to come to the aid of the state in dealing with the insecurity, adding that such efforts had not yielded desired results thereby making it possible for the terrorists to occupy a part of the state.

Addressing the governor at the IDP camp, a youth leader, Bulus Esu, said his people in Kuchi, one of the most populated towns in the Munya Local Government Area, had been displaced by the terrorists.

He said, "For three weeks now, there is no person living in Kuchi town and there is no food for the fleeing residents. The bandits have entered very deep into the area and have overrun several villages. They have occupied Kuchi."

Esu said the bandits two weeks ago demanded N5m ransom from the people of Kampana to prevent them from being kidnapped.

He added, "The people did this to avoid kidnap. However, when they came back, they asked the women to cook food for them after which they still raped the women."

In Benue State, the Vice Chancellor of Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi, Kimbir, said the abduction in the school place at 10:30pm on Saturday.

The state Police Command Public Relations Officer, Catherine Anene, said that the students were kidnapped while reading near a lecture theatre.

**Kidnappers of varsity students in Benue demand N20m ransom**

Later on Monday evening, a top official of the university, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said four students were abducted by the gunmen.

"Actually, one of the parents of the kidnapped students has informed the school that the kidnappers have contacted him and that they are demanding N20m as ransom," the official said.

The official further disclosed that four students, all males, were abducted on Saturday night. Asked if the N20m was for the four students,

he answered in the affirmative.

**Gunmen abduct two women in Zaria, police arrest five hoodlums**

In Kaduna State, bandits on Sunday night invaded Kofar Kuyambana Low Cost Housing Estate in Zaria and kidnapped two housewives.

But the police, vigilantes and other security operatives responded swiftly to distress calls, stormed the area, battled the bandits and arrested five of them.

A source told one of our correspondents on Monday that the incident took place at 9:30pm, noting that some Islamic pupils were hit by bullets and taken to an undisclosed hospital in Zaria for treatment.

The bandits were said to have invaded the estate in large numbers on motorcycles, shooting indiscriminately and targeting the home of a Customs officer.

"They succeeded in taking away the Customs officer's wife, leaving the children who were shouting, behind," said the source, adding, "the bandits attacked another house where an elderly woman was taken away too."

"The police were able to arrest two of them (bandits) on Sunday while the other three (bandits) were arrested this morning (Monday)," he added.

Although there was no official statement either from the state or the police, the state police public relations officer, Mohammed Jalige confirmed the incident.

The attack was the fifth in the state within a week. Recall that bandits on March 11 attacked the Greenfield University, along Kaduna-Abuja road killing a staff member and kidnapping 23 students.

Three of the students were killed on Friday and their corpses dumped close to the school.

On Tuesday last week, 65 people were kidnapped at the Adara community in the Kajuru Local Government Area of the state, when gunmen attacked the area.

In the early hours of Thursday, gunmen attacked Idon General Hospital also in the Kajuru Local Government Area and abducted two nurses.

On Sunday, bandits attacked Haske Baptist Church in Mannai Tasha village in Kuriga ward of the Chikun Local Government Area of the state.

**Bandits kill two more Kaduna University students**

A few hours after two women were abducted in Zaria, bandits on Monday killed two more students of the Greenfield University, Kaduna State.

The state Commissioner for Internal Security and Home Affairs, Mr Samuel Aruwan, broke the sad news on Monday.

He said, "On a sad note, security agencies have just reported to the Kaduna State Government the recovery of two more dead bodies of Greenfield University students, killed by bandits today, Monday 26th April 2021."

"The retrieved corpses have been evacuated to a mortuary, and the university has been notified of the development."

**Increased kidnaps, killings in Kaduna caused by bandits' bombardment - Gumi**

The kidnappings in Kaduna State and other parts of the country have attracted different reactions from prominent Nigerians.

An Islamic cleric, Sheikh Abubakar Gumi, attributed the increase in kidnappings in the state to the bombardment of the camps of the bandits.

Gumi, who spoke to one of our correspondents on the telephone on Monday, said the bandits had suffered heavy casualties and were determined to retaliate.

He advised the government to set up a committee to open a dialogue with those ready to embrace peace, adding that it was the only way to resolve the crisis in the state.

He said, "It is because the other states are trying to respect the peace (of the bandits), but in Kaduna State, it has been declared that they should be bombed and annihilated. Whenever the attack is much on them, they will fight back. I am calling on the authorities to pipe down and let's see how we can get them to reason and stop kidnappings and shedding of innocent blood."

Gumi asked the government to put the interest of the kidnapped students first and make necessary sacrifice to secure their freedom.

According to him, there are different factions of the kidnappers, adding that a particular gang was responsible for the continuous attacks in the state.

He said if the government could reach an agreement with the other sects, the gang would be neutralised.

"The lives of the students are more important than any principle; their lives first. So, let's save them. It is one particular notorious sect that is doing all these and other ones are blaming him (the gang leader)."

**ACF, CNGs angry with Buhari, El-Rufai over killing of Greenfield Varsity students**

The pan-Northern sociopolitical organisation, the Arewa Consultative Forum, said the latest killing of the abducted students of the Greenfield University was the worst form of terrorism that befell the country.

The National Publicity Secretary of the Forum, Emmanuel Yawe, reacting on behalf of the ACF, asked how the President, Major-General Muhammadu Buhari (retd), and the Kaduna State Governor, Malam Nasir El-Rufai, felt about the latest killing of the students.

The ACF's Spokesman said, "This is the worst form of terrorism and barbarism ever visited on Nigeria. How much was used to set up the university that the terrorists are demanding N800m as ransom? The people committing these heinous crimes are they Northerners, are they Nigerians?"

"What are the federal and state governments doing to stop this human waste? Our members want to know how el Rufai the Governor of Kaduna and Muahammadu Bihari feel about these tragic turn of events. The ACF feels and shares the pains of Nigerians in these tragic developments."

On its part, the Coalition of Northern Groups, described the killing as "regrettable" and "avoidable" if Nigeria had a listening government.

The group said having a leader such as Governor Nasir El-Rufai who could not be advised or criticised was a liability.

The CNG's Spokesman, AbdulAzeez Suleiman while reacting to the killing, told one of our correspondents on Monday, said the group had resolved intensify pressure including mass protest to force the Kaduna government to reason.

CNG's spokesman said, "We find the killing of two more students of Greenfield University quite regrettable but avoidable if we have a listening government. Unfortunately we have a government in place that has stubbornly refused to heed genuine advice on its handling of the deteriorating security situation in Kaduna state."

"We have all along pointed out that leaders, such as the ones we have Kaduna, who would not be advised or criticized are certainly a liability."

**Killing represents "leaderless" state that does not care for welfare of citizens - SOKAPU**

Also, the Southern Kaduna Peoples Union said it was saddened by the killing of the harmless university students by the bandits.

The SOKAPU's Spokesman, Luka Binniyat, in an interview with The PUNCH, said, "We are saddened with bands of maniacal murderers and desperate outlaws who are taking full advantage of a leaderless state that cares nothing about the welfare and security of its citizens."

**Nine policemen killed in Kebbi**

Meanwhile, the Kebbi State police Command has confirmed the killing of nine of its personnel including a divisional police officer by bandits in the Sakaba Local Government Area of the state.

Nafi'u Abubakar, in an interview with journalists, on Monday, stated, "DPO Sakaba, eight other policemen and two 'yan-sa-kais' lost their lives during a gun duel with the bandits on Sunday at about 14:30 hours."

