

Terrorists kill 22, kidnap 67 in Katsina, Zamfara, set houses ablaze

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•Four cops feared killed as hoodlums attack police checkpoint

About 22 persons have been reportedly killed and 67 others kidnapped in different attacks by suspected terrorists in communities in Katsina, Zamfara and Kaduna states.

An official of the Katsina State Emergency Management Agency, Shamsu Yakubu, revealed on Saturday that terrorists killed 12 persons and abducted 38 others during the last Tuesday's attack on Guga town in the Bakori Local Government Area of the state.

He also revealed that the terrorists burnt no fewer than 35 shops, 11 houses and six vehicles.

Yakubu made the revelation shortly after officials of the National Emergency Management Agency and those of SEMA visited the town for the on-the-spot assessment of the situation.

The terrorists had attacked Guga, Dukawa and Gidan Kanawa. Dukawa and Gidan Kanawa are neighbouring communities in the Funtua Local Government Area of the state.

Residents said the terrorists began operation late Monday at Dukawa, where they looted shops, before they moved to Gidan Kanawa, reportedly killing three residents.

It was learnt that the terrorists later moved to Guga on Tuesday morning, killing 16 residents and abducting the village head, Alhaji Umar.

The spokesperson for the police in the state, SP Gambo Isah, had confirmed the attack but gave no details.

However, he said the police repelled an attack on the Nassarawa-Bugaje village in the Jibia Local Government area of the state.

The invasion came barely 48 hours after terrorists struck at Magama-Jibiya in the same

local government area, where a Divisional Police Officer, DSP Abdullahi Rano, was killed during crossfire between security operatives and the terrorists.

The spokesman for the police in the state, SP Gambo Isah, who confirmed the Friday attack, said the police were able to recover 350 domestic animals earlier rustled from the village by the terrorists.

Isah explained, "On Friday, February 11, 2022, around 4pm, a distress call was received that terrorists in their numbers on motorcycles were shooting with AK-47 rifles in Nassarawa-Bugaje village, Jibiya Local Government Area, and rustled large number of domestic animals.

"A police patrol team, led by O/C (officer-in-charge) Anti-kidnapping Unit, was dispatched to the scene and engaged the hoodlums in a gun duel. The operational strategy and tactics exhibited by the police team forced the hoodlums to retreat, abandon their mission and take to their heels.

"The team succeeded in recovering all the rustled animals, comprising 200 cows and 150 sheep. In the course of scanning the scene, two new brand operational motorcycles belonging to the terrorists were recovered. Furthermore, some stolen provisions were recovered. Investigation is ongoing."

The police had earlier on Friday paraded 13 suspects in Katsina for terrorism-related offences.

In Zamfara, eight people were said to have been burnt to death by terrorists at Kango village of Bungudu Local Government Area, while 29 others were abducted.

An indigene of the village, Ibrahim Sani told Sunday PUNCH on the phone that the incident happened on Friday evening when the assailants on motorcycles attacked the village.

Sani said, immediately they

arrived at the village, they began to shoot in different directions to scare the villagers.

He said some people were able to escape to the bush while others ran into their houses and locked themselves.

He stated, "When they opened fire, the people ran helter-skelter for safety. Many people were able to escape as they ran into the bush, while others ran into their houses and locked themselves."

Sani said the bandits went from house to house searching for food items, animals as well as people to abduct.

According to him, they abducted 29 people, carted away food items and rustled animals.

"They burnt eight people who refused to open their doors alive. They poured kerosene on the roofs and set the rooms on fire. As I am talking to you, the whole village has been deserted," Sani added.

Efforts to get comments from the spokesperson for the state police command, SP Mohammed Shehu, failed as he could not be reached on the phone after several attempts.

In Kaduna, terrorists invaded Ma Kura village in Atyap Chieftdom, Zango-Kataf Local Government Area of the state, killing two and injuring several others.

The attack, it was learnt, occurred on Friday night through to the early hours of Saturday, forcing residents to flee the area.

A source said the attackers who came in large numbers, moved from house to house and unleashed terror on the residents.

"The attackers came while people were asleep but the villagers were able to organise themselves against the invaders and that brought the number of those killed to about two," he said.

The source said those who suffered injuries had been rushed to an undisclosed hospital for medical attention, adding that

several houses were razed during the attack.

He stated that security operatives had taken over the village to restore normalcy.

There was no official statement either from the state government or the police in the state.

When contacted by one of our correspondents, the Police Public Relations Officer in the state, ASP Mohammed Jalige, neither picked up calls nor responded to a text message.

In another development, about four policemen on Saturday evening were reportedly killed by gunmen at a police checkpoint at Obeagu Uno Amechi along Awkunanaw - Agbani road in Enugu South Local Government Area of the Enugu state.

This is coming barely 48 hours three policemen and Custom officer were killed in two checkpoints within the state capital.

Our correspondent report that six people including four policemen were killed at the same Obeagu Uno checkpoint on July 21, 2021 by gunmen.

Community sources told our correspondent that Saturday incident which happened around 3:45 pm left motorists and residents living along the ever busy road scampering for safety, abandoning their vehicles on the road.

Although details of the attack were still sketchy, one of the sources told Sunday PUNCH that he saw one policeman lying dead along the road when he passed the area around 4:20pm, adding that the hoodlums might have killed more policemen at the checkpoint as blood littered around.

Efforts to get an official reaction from the state Police Command were unsuccessful as the command's spokesman, Daniel Ndukwe, could not be reached as of the time of filing this report.