

Again, bandits raid Kaduna, Zamfara, kill 62, abduct 62, raze 70 houses

Godwin Isenyo, Israel Bulus
and Maiharaji Altine

THE orgy of violence in the northern part of the country has claimed 60 lives in Kaduna and Zamfara states.

Twenty-five persons, including two military personnel, were reportedly killed, while a riot policeman allegedly shot a passerby and no fewer than 70 houses were razed on Sunday following an attack by terrorists on Aghan Kagoro in the Kaura Local Government Area of Kaduna State.

The two local governments are in the Southern Kaduna area of the state and share boundaries.

In Zamfara State, bandits killed 37 persons and kidnapped 62 others in Juyi and Doruwa villages in the Bungudu Local Government Area, while 20 others were killed in Ganar-Kiyawa village in the Bukkuyum Local Government Area on Saturday.

The Kaduna killings sparked protests on Monday as irate youths from the affected area blocked the road and attacked travellers.

It was learnt that a bus was set ablaze during the protest as riot policemen fired into the protesting youths, with a bullet allegedly hitting one of the protesters.

This forced the state government to impose a 24-hour curfew on the Jema'a and Kaura local government areas of the state.

The Commissioner for Internal Security and Home Affairs, Samuel Aruwan, who announced this in a statement, said the measure was to allow security agencies to save lives and property, and restore law and order in the areas.

The statement said the government appealed to residents of the local government areas to cooperate with security agencies to restore peace, law and order.

The commissioner quoted Governor Nasir El-Rufai to have condemned the violence that left many dead and property destroyed.

The statement titled, 'KDSG declares 24-hour curfew in Jema'a and Kaura LGAs', read, 'Following advice from security agencies, the Kaduna State Government has declared a 24-hour curfew in Jema'a and Kaura local government areas with immediate effect. This is to assist the security agencies to stabilise the situation in the areas, save lives and property, and enable the restoration of law and order.

A statement from the Ministry of

Internal Security and Home Affairs said the security agencies had full authorisation to enforce the curfew. The government appeals to all residents of the Jema'a and Kaura local government areas to cooperate with the security agencies in the urgent task of restoring peace and upholding law and order.

"The government condemns the violence and all acts of lawlessness that have occurred in the area."

The District Head, Kukum community in the Kagoro Chiefdom, Mr Jashua Kagoya, who narrowly escaped the attack, said the terrorists invaded the community in a military van with sophisticated weapons and took vantage positions.

According to him, the villagers retired home after their normal activities when they suddenly heard gunshots around 8pm and they had to flee the community.

Kagoya stated, "As you can see, my personal house is completely razed down, but I thank God that my family members and I were able to escape the attack.

"It is very sad that such carnage has been meted out on the peace loving people of Kagoro. We condemn this act in totality and we're calling on the government to rise to its primary responsibility of protecting lives and property."

The district head disclosed that 23 corpses had been recovered, while a search was on for others.

The Wakilin Yamma of Kagoro Chiefdom, Mr Yanshen Sunday, said when he heard gunshots, he contacted the Commandant of the Operation Safe Haven, who promised to respond immediately, which he did.

Sunday said, "While we were trying to figure out what was happening, I saw two military vans and thought the military men came to defend our community, but to my greatest surprise, they were the attackers.

"Before we knew it, the whole place was on fire. We have recovered 23 dead bodies, but I cannot ascertain the number of houses burnt down.

"While some youths were reacting to the killings, a riot policeman was alleged to have shot dead a passerby, which escalated the tension in the Jema'a Local Government Area."

A resident of the community, Mr Derek Christopher, said the terrorists came in large numbers in military vans, buses and motorbikes.

He stated, "Two military officers were killed by the attackers.

"Before now, a lot of locals could not

access their farmlands for fear of being killed. We're calling on the government to immediately deploy security in the Aghan community to ensure that the people are safe."

An indigene of the Bungudu Local Government Area of Zamfara State, Sani Ibrahim, told one of our correspondents that the terrorists, who rode on motorcycles, attacked Juyi and Doruwa villages of the Kekun Waje around 2pm on Saturday and killed 17 villagers and kidnapped 62 others.

Ibrahim said the terrorists, who were in large numbers, carried sophisticated weapons opened fire on anyone in sight immediately they got to the villages.

He stated, "They came to our village around 2pm on Saturday and immediately opened fire on anyone they came across.

"I was lucky to escape to Bingi village, because they did not see me as I was hiding behind one of the trees in the village, but one of my children was killed."

Ibrahim added that the two villages were currently deserted as the residents had fled to other places for safety.

He also said apart from the 62 persons kidnapped during the attack, there were over 50 persons at the terrorists' camp, who were kidnapped some weeks earlier.

Another indigene of the Bukkuyum Local Government Area of the state, Mohammed Isa, said the terrorists killed 20 persons in Ganar-Kiyawa village on Sunday.

According to Isa, the bandits invaded Ganar-Kiyawa village around 9am and killed 20 persons and wounded many others.

He said the bandits, who were carrying AK-47 rifles, invaded the village and started shooting in different directions.

In a statement, the Special Adviser to Governor Bello Mattawale on Media, Zailani Bappa, said the governor was deeply saddened by the recent bandits' attack on some communities in the state.

Matawale was quoted to have said the dastardly and cowardly attack was coming at a time when peace was fast improving in the state, adding that it would not deter the efforts of his administration at achieving it.

While condoling with the families of the victims, the governor ordered the Ministry for Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management to immediately release relief materials to victims of the attack and their families.

The Christian Association of Nigeria in Kaduna State condemned the attack,

describing it as sad.

The Chairman, CAN in the state, Rev John Hayab, condemned the latest attack and killings in Kagoro without any substantial action from the government and security forces.

The cleric in a statement titled, 'When will the killing of innocent people in Kaduna stop?' maintained that citizens of the state were tired of the never ending rhetoric without concrete actions to protect lives and property.

Hayab, who's also the Vice-Chairman of CAN in the northern states, called on citizens to rise up and protect themselves since the government had failed to do so.

He also called on the state government to swallow its pride and seek genuine help to end the continued killings in the state.

Hayab stated, "The Christian Association of Nigeria, Kaduna State chapter, is sad and grieving following the continued killings, kidnappings, banditry and the unimaginable evil going on in our state unabated without any substantial action by the government and security forces.

"One only needs to see how human beings are killed and roasted by bandits, who attacked Kagoro, to conclude that this is one loss too many.

"How long will this evil continue and when will our leaders act dutifully? Kaduna State citizens are tired of the government's rhetorical responses without concrete action taken to protect lives and property.

"Accordingly, we want to hear and see the killers and kidnappers arrested as the government's usual media condemnation whenever there is havoc is not good enough."

He added, "Meanwhile, we appeal to citizens to also wake up and do the needful, protecting their lives and community. When a government fails to protect you, you ought to find a means of defending yourself.

"For the record, Kaduna State has lost several lives in the past four years, while the leaders scarcely show empathy or concern for the victims, seeing that the government's response is usually in the media. Sadly, the dead cannot read nor listen to the news."

When contacted on the telephone, the spokesman for the state police command, ASP Mohammad Jalige, did not take his calls and had yet to reply to a text message sent to his mobile telephone by our correspondent as of the time of filing this report.