

Bandits kill 19, raze houses in fresh Katsina attack

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File: Bandits

By Faith Maji

At least 19 people have reportedly been killed and dozens of homes and shops razed in a fresh attack by bandits on Gobirawa Community in Kuki ward of Dutsinma Local Government Area of Katsina State.

The attack, which occurred on Saturday night around 9:00 pm, was carried out by armed men believed to have come from the neighbouring Danmusa forest.

The assailants stormed the community, shooting sporadically, killing residents and setting structures ablaze, according to eyewitness accounts.

While the Katsina State Police Command has confirmed five fatalities, residents insist the death toll is significantly higher.

The Police Public Relations Officer, DSP Abubakar Sadiq, told *The PUNCH* on Tuesday that five persons were fatally shot and two vehicles were set ablaze, adding that investigations were ongoing to arrest the perpetrators and prevent further attacks.

However, a resident of the community, Sani Kuki, disputed the official figure, stating that 19 persons were killed on the spot during the siege.

“This is totally out of control. I couldn’t even stay till the end of the burial process because of how angry and heartbroken I was. I left while they were still digging graves for five of the victims who were burnt alive,” Kuki said in a phone interview.

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He added that some residents, including women, children and the elderly, were burnt alive while hiding inside grain silos.

Many of the bodies, burnt beyond recognition, were recovered the following morning.

In addition to the killings, over 20 houses were set ablaze, all shops in the community were destroyed, and an unspecified number of people were abducted, mostly vulnerable groups.

Kuki described the level of devastation as overwhelming. “As of now, I don’t think there are up to 20 women remaining in the community. Many people have been evacuated in at least 20 vehicles to safer areas,” he lamented.

The violence only subsided when an Armored Personnel Carrier vehicle was seen approaching, forcing the attackers to retreat.

“We are pleading with the authorities to urgently come to our aid,” Kuki added. “This war is gradually creeping toward the local government headquarters. We need more security presence now.”