

## ■ 9 suspected kidnappers killed, 15 others arrested in Niger

## ■ 3 Chinese expatriates rescued

From **JOHN ADAMS,**  
Minna

**THE** onslaught against kidnappers and armed bandits by security agents in Niger State is beginning to yield results following the arrest of 15 suspects. Among those arrested was a three-man kidnapping syndicate whose gang leader is based in Guinea.

The arrests were made in the last two months in the six local government areas under siege of kidnappers and other bandits. Nine suspected kidnappers and other armed bandits were killed in gun battle with security agents within the period.

Following the increase in the kidnapping and other banditry activities in the state in recent time, as a result of the military operations going on in Zamfara, Kaduna and Katsina states, the Inspector General of Police, Adamu Mohammed, deplored Special Anti-Kidnapping Squad (SAKS) code named Operation Puff Adder in the state.

Puff Adder in conjunction with the tactical team of the state command beamed its searchlight on the flash points in communities in Mashehu, Rafi, Paikoro, Suleja, Bida and Shiroro local government areas where banditry and kidnapping had assumed an alarming proportion.

A number of victims taken into hostage by these kidnappers were rescued including three Chinese expatriates working with the Rural Access Mobility Programme (RAMP).

They were taking hostage along Minna-Kontagora Road in broad daylight, and spent over two weeks before their rescue.



• Suspects on parade

Before the onslaught, a number of communities, especially those sharing borders with Kaduna, Zamfara, Katsina and Kebbi states were under severe attacks from the armed bandits. Over 5,000 people across these communities were forced to relocate from their ancestral homes, and now taking refuge with either their relations or in Internally Displaced (IDP) Camp setup by government.

Governor Alhaji Abubakar Sani Bello recently boosted the operation of the security agents with the distribution

of operational vehicles and motorcycles. The security agents included Police, Army, NSCDC and DSS. They shared 70 Hilux vans and 80 motorcycles to enhance their operations.

He called for extra-vigilance among stakeholders as a necessary measure to stem the tide of the growing insecurity in the state and country in general. He urged traditional rulers to constantly up date the government on security challenges in their domains, reminded them that security agencies alone cannot handle the increasing insecurity, hence the need for a functional

collaboration with traditional and religious rulers as well as community participation in addressing the challenges:

"There is high probability that some of the fleeing criminals may find their way into neighboring state. e must all be vigilant and proactive in order to identify, isolate and apprehend them." He advised the people not to take laws into their hands by carrying out jungle justice: "Anyone apprehended must be handed over to security agencies for prosecution."

The state Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Mohammad Abubakar, told *Daily Sun* that no fewer than 10 AK 47 rifles and 109 round of ammunition were recov-

ered from the bandits. While assuring the people of the determination of the police to bring the security situation under control, he appealed to the public to always avail the security agents with useful information that help in the war against kidnapping and other forms of armed banditry.

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From **Emmanuel Adeyemi,**  
Lokoja