

Bandits massacre 33 residents in Katsina communities

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SHARES



Agaju Madugba, *Katsina*

Gunmen suspected to be bandits on Friday night attacked two communities in Batsari local government area of Katsina State reportedly killing a total of about 33 residents.

When the Commissioner of Police, Sanusi Buba, led a team of security personnel to the area on Saturday, Tsauwa and Dankar communities were virtually deserted following the attack as some of the residents buried their dead.

One of the surviving residents, Salisu Lawal, told reporters that no fewer than 23 villagers were slaughtered at Tsauwa village with additional 10 residents murdered at the neighbouring Dankar village in the course of the attacks.

The police commissioner who confirmed the killing of 21 villagers from the two communities said that he was saddened by the development.





The latest attacks may be an indication that dialogues which the state government had with the bandits late last year may have collapsed.

According to statistics from the coalition of civil society organisations in Katsina, bandits and kidnappers launched a total of 26 attacks on communities and individuals between December 2019 and January 5, 2020, alone.

“In the process, they tended to have expanded their operations with incursions into more territories from the initial eight front line local government areas.”

This is in spite of efforts by the government to curtail the activities of the bandits even as an embattled Governor Aminu Bello Masari last August embraced all odds, went deep into the various forest locations in parts of the state in a bid to woo the criminals into surrendering their arms and adopt the peace dialogue.

The initiative might not have yielded the expected results, for according to a report by the civil society groups, “the dialogue done with the bandits, initiated in good faith, became efficient for a while because it was neither professional nor built on any defined framework.”

But Masari insists that the cease-fire agreement he had with the bandits remains valid explaining however that, “not all those living in the forests embraced the peace process. Those that didn’t join, who are not more than 10 to 15 per cent, are still holding onto their weapons and are leaders in the forest. If you say those who embraced the peace should hand over their arms, the other groups still holding onto their arms may kill them or force them to go back into banditry. What those 10 to 15 per cent group want is for the repentant bandits to come back and continue with them. The only way they can protect themselves is by holding onto their weapons.”





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