

Niger: Bandits kill park guard, injure others, abduct 30 in fresh attacks

From John Adams, Minna

BANDITS continued their onslaughts on Niger communities, yesterday, with the abduction of no fewer than 30 villagers in Kutunku town, Wushishi Local Government Area.

The bandits stormed the village on foot at about 1:30am and rounded up the villagers. The bandits, it was gathered, hid their motorcycles in a bush close to the village and trekked to their target, a development that did not arouse the suspicion of the villagers until it was too late.

A source disclosed that those abducted included 20 Gbagyi made up of 11 men and nine females, nine Fulani and one person of another tribe.

"They forced them (abductees) to trek along with them to their camp," a source said.

The bandits are yet to contact families of the victims at present time.

One of the women abducted, according to the source, was billed to be married this weekend.

A senior local government official said a report was made to the Divisional Police Officer in Zungeru "but we are yet to hear from him."

All efforts to get police confirmation of the story proved abortive.

But chairman of Rafi Local Government Area, Alhaji Ismaila Modibo Kagara, confirmed the incident.

The bandits also killed a security guard with the Kainji National Park in Borgu Local Government and injured several others.

Name of the deceased guard was given as Tanko Mohammed from Wawa town community in New Bussa. His remains were first taken to the palace of the District head of Wawa who directed the mourners to take their case to the Emir of Borgu, Alhaji Mohammed Dantoro.

The remains of Tanko Mohammed were later interred according to Islamic rites in Wawa his place of origin.

A source close to the Park told our correspondent on telephone that no fewer than four other guards who were together with the late Mohammed at the time of the invasion, also sustained varying degrees of injuries.

Worried by the rising security challenges, Governor, Abubakar Sani Bello, has declared that henceforth, vigilance groups would bear pump action guns.

The vigilantes had complained that lack of modern weapons was the greatest challenge in their fight against bandits who they said were equipped with modern and sophisticated weapons.

• Gov rules out dialogue, to arm vigilante with automatic guns



President Muhammadu Buhari (right) and former Vice President/ECOWAS Head of Mission on the election in Niger Republic, Namadi Sambo during their meeting at the Presidential Villa, Abuja, yesterday.

Speaking at Kasuwan Garba in Mariga Local Government Area when he met with over 200 vigilantes as part of his moral boosting visits across the state, the governor said henceforth, all vigilantes in the state would be armed with automatic pump action to enable them take the fight to the bandits

in their hideouts.

Also, contrary to demands of the bandits in a viral audio that government disband the vigilante group as one of the conditions for a ceasefire, the governor said: "We're not going to disband the vigilantes as a result of threat from the bandits. Even when banditry activities in the state stop,

the vigilantes will still be there to provide security at the local government areas."

He re-emphasised government's stands not to go into any form of negotiation with bandits nor pay ransom for the release of kidnapped victims in the state. He, however, assured that any bandit that repents and sur-

render their weapon would be reintegrated into the society and settle to live a normal life.

"There will be no dialogue but any of them that repent and surrender his weapons will be forgiven and we will compensate such bandits to be able live a normal live in the society."

There can't be peace without justice -CAN

From Emmanuel Adeyemi, Lokoja

PRESIDENT of Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Dr. Samson Ayokunle, has said without justice, fairness and equity, there can never be peace.

The cleric, who advised Nigerian leaders to always exhibit caution and make

the fear of God their watchword, said Nigeria has all it takes to be a great nation.

He said Nigeria is a complex nation with different ethnic, religious and socio-cultural background, adding that with its endowed human and materials resources, if properly harnessed together, the country would join comity

of great states and dust off the present hardships that has bedevilled the nation.

He said a society devoid of justice, oppression will take the centre stage, noting that for the country to be great, it needs justice, fairness and mutual respect for one and another in all segment of the divide in the society.

The CAN president who said the present generation

inability to complete the over 200kms Abuja-Lokoja highway that has been under construction since 15 years, saying it was a shame on the nation.

He spoke in Lokoja at the official inauguration of Government House chapel for Christian worshippers built by the administration of Governor Yahaya Bello

Governor Bello who was represented by his deputy