

from Enugu Road when I saw people shouting fire! fire!.. pointing at the roofs of phone shops in the Ogige Main Market.

"I don't know what might be the cause of the fire since the shops are all locked because of a set-at-home order by the Indigenous People of Biafra being observed every Monday in the South East," the source said.

The source said further that over 20 shops were badly affected by the fire, adding that quick intervention of fire fighters

Gunmen slaughter 18 in Niger Mosque, abduct 7 others

From John Adams, Minna

GUNMEN have killed no fewer than 18 persons in a mosque at Mazakuka in Mashegu Local Government Council of Niger State.

The gunmen were said to have stormed the mosque in the early hours of Monday when the victims were performing their early morning prayers (Subhi).

•Police kill 1 bandit

The attackers were also said to have used dangerous weapons, including machete and sharp objects on their victims.

According to a source close to the community, the bullet-wound on the bodies of the victims shows that they were shot at close range.

The gunmen invaded the community in motorcycles

and made their way straight to the mosque where the people had gathered for prayers.

There was pandemonium in the entire community as people scrambled for their safety as the gunmen unleashed terror on their victims.

"We are surprised, confused and shocked over the attack", an indigene of the community who did not want his name in print said.

Although 18 bodies were seen within the vicinity of the mosque, our source however pointed out that the casualty figure could be more because many people ran into the bush for safety and were yet to return.

Confirming the incident, the state Commissioner of Police, Mr. Monday Kuryas, said that at about 5:30am some unknown gunmen stormed and attacked the people at Mazakuka village while praying at the mosque, killing an unspecified number of worshippers.

According to him, the gunmen later destroyed property worth millions of

naira belonging to Alhaji Abubakar Maigandus in the village before abducting seven other victims.

He explained that the police killed one of the attackers, adding that preliminary findings indicate that the attack was a reprisal one as a result of a long standing communal clash.

He however disclosed that already additional armed security personnel had since been deployed to the area to ensure that normalcy returns and arrest the miscreants undermining the peaceful co-existence among the people.

The Commissioner then solicited for the support of residents, especially those at rural areas to come forward with reliable information that could aid the personnel deployed across the state to ensure the arrest and prosecution of all those involved in the criminal acts.

"We are battle ready to confront any form of criminal elements as long as good Samaritans can volunteer credible information on movement of dubious characters in their midst", he said.

Kaduna communal clash claims 4, injures 3 in Zangon Kataf

From Noah Ebije, Kaduna

COMMUNAL clashes yesterday claimed four lives and injured three persons in Jankasa community of Zangon Kataf Local Government Area of Kaduna State.

Though the cause of the clash was not disclosed, it was stated that it was a crisis between locals and some herders in Jankasa, which also led to reprisal in Kaura Local Government Area of the state, leading to the killing of 13 cows. Security report had it that

the injured persons were receiving treatment in an undisclosed hospital.

This was contained in a statement by the Commissioner for Internal Security and Home Affairs, Samuel Aruwan.

"The military and police authorities have reported to the Kaduna State Government that four people have been killed and three others injured during a clash between locals and some herders in Jankasa, Zangon Kataf local government area.

"According to the reports, the clash occurred along some cattle routes in the area, and then escalated into a firefight between the two groups, before security forces arrived to bring the situation under control. The injured persons are now receiving treatment in hospital.

"Further to this, security agencies reported that unknown gunmen attacked some settled herders at Manchok, Kaura LGA. The security agencies reported that this was an apparent reprisal to the initial clash.