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Massacre in Niger, as bandits kill 37, burn houses

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From **John Adams**, Minna

Gunmen went berserk in Niger communities on Tuesday, killing 37 people in what could be regarded as a reprisal after special hunters and vigilance groups killed scores of terrorists on Friday last week.

The latest attack happened at about 11:00am in Nakuna and Wurukuchi communities, in Shiroro Local Government Area of the state, when the villagers were in the farm to harvest farm produce.

While 10 people belonging to one family were killed on the farm, 20 bodies were discovered in the bush, all in Nakuna.

In Wamburiki, four members of a family were killed, also on the farm.

All houses in Nakuna, with a population of at least 200, were burnt down by the gunmen, who stormed the community in search of vigilantes, according to sources close to the community.

Also, the gunmen in their numbers burnt down all the food stores and barns in the community before leaving the area.

Special hunters and local vigilantes had, at the weekend, carried out operations in communities in Shiroro and Munya LGAs of Niger State in which scores of the gunmen were killed and several others escaped with bulletsinjuries.

The gunmen, however, succeeded in capturing three of the hunters.

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A 75-year-old man, Mallam Yahaya Mota Nakuna, whose six children and four others who came to assist them to harvest their farm produce were killed, narrated to Daily Sun how the gunmen tied the wrists of the children to their back before shooting them at close range.

Speaking through an interpreter, Yahaya said, “My children were in the farm harvesting yam when the gunmen came in their large numbers and demanded to know where the vigilantes that came to operate in the area were.

“I told them that we did not know any vigilante, and they asked if we saw any vigilante that passed through the village and we said we did not know. The next thing, they asked all my children to come out of the farm and marched them to the village.

“They tied their hands to the back and began to shoot them one after the other. They first beheaded one of them before shooting the remaining nine right in my front. After killing them, they asked me to go”.

Yahaya, in tears, pointed out that he refused to leave as instructed by the gunmen, instead, he invited a relation from a nearby village to come and help him bury his children before leaving the village.

According to him, “Only two of us dug the graves and buried their bodies. We spent over five hours digging the graves to bury them because we were just two,” he added.

Meanwhile, the entire Zumba community is now flooded with internally displaced people (IDPs) without food and shelter, as hundreds, including women and children, have fled their homes.

Niger State Commissioner of Police Monday Kuryas confirmed the incident. He said the police were yet to ascertain the actual number of people killed, adding that security agents have been deployed to the affected communities to restore normalcy.

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