

Gunmen kill 3 soldiers, 4 vigilantes, 4 villagers, burn houses in Niger

- Gov. Bello under fire over comment on attacks
- Stop playing politics with attacks, APC chieftain tells Buhari

From **John Adams,**
Minna

TERRORISTS attacks in Niger State continued unabated, yesterday, as three soldiers, four local vigilantes and four villagers were killed.

Daily Sun learnt that the three soldiers and four vigilantes were ambushed and killed while on patrol in Kwanan Dutse in Mariga Local Government Area.

A source close to the vigilantes in Mariga LGA said over 50 bandits carried out the attack which also led to several persons sustaining injuries.

The gunmen had two weeks ago, in similar circumstances, killed three policemen and injured others. The attacks were also extended to Ishau community in Paikoro Local Government Area, where four people were killed.

No fewer than six communities, namely Ishau, Kuna, Amale, Adunu, Kudami and Beni had come under attack from the gunmen, forcing hundreds of villagers to flee to

neighbouring communities.

Among those killed in Adunu was a 20-year-old boy shot at a close range while returning to the village on his motorcycle after dropping off passengers at Kafin Koro.

At Beni, a woman was also shot on her two legs. She is receiving treatment at a Kafin Koro hospital. A source in the community said the gunmen that carried out the attacks were about 100 in number.

"They were all armed with sophisticated weapons. The local vigilantes, the Joint Security Task Force, put up a brave fight and killed a number of the gunmen," he said.

Attempts to confirm the latest attack from the Chairman of Paikoro Local Government Area, Mallam Yohana Yakubu failed as he did not pick his calls.

The latest attack has swelled the number of Internally Displaced People (IDPs) in Kafin Koro even as available schools have been converted to camps.

Meanwhile, a group, Concerned Shiroro Youths of Niger State, has described the

claim by Governor Abubakar Bello that the latest killings of members of the Joint Security TaskForce, local vigilantes and villagers in Galadiman Kogo, was because the villagers were not proactive, as an insult to the collective sensibility of the people.

The group, in a statement by Mallam Sani Abubakar Yusuf Kokki said contrary to government's claim, the locals were proactive but government failed them.

Kokki accused the government of "resorting to blame game in a desperate move to put up a defence for failure, one of the indices of a weak, failed and non-performing government.

"The locals were instead proactive to have informed the authorities concerned about the imminent attack haven gotten a hint about their (terrorists') movement in the direction of Galadima Kogo. Instead of government beefing up security, it opted for the withdrawal of some security personnel and redeployed them to a yet to be ascertained location. This is a

futile attempt to cover up the visible mess perpetrated by government officials. A government that cannot reconcile its differences and discrepancies should not be taken seriously."

Also, a chieftain of the All Progressive Congress (APC) and former Commissioner for Information Culture and Tourism in Niger State, Jonathan Vatsa, appealed to President Muhammadu Buhari not to play politics with insecurity in Niger State, saying the killings were worse than what the country experienced during the civil war.

"I strongly appeal to Mr. President to as a matter of urgency to match his words with action and order the military to flush out these enemies of the helpless villagers.

"The situation in Niger state is worst than what was experienced during the Nigerian civil war. In fact, people didn't die like they are being killed now during the civil war.

"It is time Mr. President stop playing politics with security situation in Niger State. The state is under siege, the gunmen have changed our lifestyle in the state. Farmers cannot go to their farms, students cannot go to their schools and we can not travel freely within the state."

Dead: 11 killed 1 100 kidnapped 2 240 injured 001 in 2021 El Dufai