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12 soldiers, 3 vigilante feared killed, 20 injured as bandits attack Kaduna military base

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From **Molly Kilete, Abuja and Noah Ebije, Kaduna**

Barely a week after terrorists killed eight and kidnapped scores of passengers aboard an Abuja-Kaduna-bound train, no fewer than 12 soldiers and three vigilante were feared killed, while 20 were injured in a fresh attack on a military base in Birnin Gwari Local Government Area of Kaduna State.

The terrorists believed to be over 200 had stormed the military base with heavy artillery gun fire and destroyed three Armoured Personnel Carrier (APC) and overpowering troops stationed there.

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A source said the terrorists who wielded AK-47 and rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) stormed the military base on motorcycles. He said the confrontation with soldiers lasted for about two hours before the soldiers were eventually subdued.

“We lost 12 men while 20 soldiers were wounded in action. They also burnt down three armoured Personnel Carriers (APC) after they overwhelmed the troops. They also carted away several weapons from the troops,” the source said.

The attack, it was learnt, has thrown the 1 Division of the Nigerian Army in Kaduna into confusion.

Daily Sun learnt that while the 19 soldiers injured were rushed to the General Hospital, Birnin Gwari, the remains of the 12 soldiers were deposited at the 44 Nigerian Army Reference Hospital, Kaduna.

A military officer told Daily Sun that the attackers came from Shiroro in Niger State which has become a hot bed for terrorists. He said the attack has left the military devastated as the authority was thinking of how to break the news to families who lost soldiers during the attack.

As at the time of filing this report, there was no official statement from the police, army and the vigilante on the attack.

Director, Army Public Relations, Brig. Gen. Onyema Nwachukwu, could not be reached as he is was said to have travelled with the Chief of Army Staff to the North East theatre of operations.

However, a statement by the Chairman of the Birnin Gwari Emirate Progressive Union (BEPU), Ishaq Usman Kasai, confirmed the death of three vigilante, saying the attack took place around 3pm on Sunday.

He said the attackers were members of the Ansaru who are believed to have come in from Niger State.

“When we heard of it, we had to run and seek refuge elsewhere. Most of the residents slept outside Birnin Gwari town.”

He said normalcy returned, yesterday, around 10am, describing the Kaduna /Birnin Gwari as the most dangerous road in the country.

Meanwhile, the army has said the volatile and complex security emergencies facing the nation has necessitated the continuous review of the national security architecture to contain the threats.

Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Lt. Gen. Faruk Yahaya, made this known at the opening of a seminar on Intensifying Warriors Ethos, in Abuja.

He was represented by the Chief Of Policy and Plans (COPP), Major General Anthony Omozodje.

The COAS said the varied acts of insurgency, terrorism, kidnapping, banditry and other terrorist organisations have continued to pose substantive threats to the nation, but assured that troops have continued to “respond assiduously to contain and decimate all adversaries of Nigeria.”

Yahaya said the seminar put together by the Department Of Transformation and Innovation was aimed at boosting the fighting spirit of personnel deployed in the North East and other operational theatres across Nigeria.

Earlier in his address, the Chief of Transformation and Innovation, Major General Charles Ofoche, said the seminar was organised to brainstorm and proffer practicable ways of imbibing