

Joint security task force kills 10 bandits, rescues 14 abductees in Niger

- Hunters arrested for stealing recovered cows

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From **John Adams**, Minna

The Niger State Commissioner for Local Government and Internal Security, Emmanuel Umar, has confirmed the killings of no fewer than 10 bandits in Uregi village, in Rafi local government area of the state, on Monday.

Seven motorcycles belonging to the bandits, including arms were also recovered from the bandits.

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The Commissioner, in a statement in Minna, the state capital, also said 14 kidnapped victims were rescued during the operation by the Joint Security Task Force in the area.

He disclosed that the bandits had wanted to disrupt the peaceful Eid-el-fitr celebration when the joint task force launched an onslaught on Kawo and Uregi villages.

The commissioner said: "On 02/05/2022, at about 1700hrs, armed bandits on motorcycles attempted to attack Kawo, Uregi villages in Rafi LGA, to disrupt Sallah celebration in the State.

"On the receipt of the information, joint security tactical teams responded swiftly and mobilised to the area where the hoodlums were engaged around Uregi, Kiribo villages and, as a result, about 10 bandits were neutralised, 14 kidnapped citizens were rescued and seven motorcycles recovered, including arms, from them."

Meanwhile, some local hunters employed by the Shiroro Local Government Council of Niger state to compliment the efforts of the security agents in the area, in the ongoing war against gunmen, have been arrested, for allegedly stealing some cows which were recovered from bandits.

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They were arrested following the discovery that some of the cows that were recovered from bandits during an operation in Galape community in Shiroro local government were missing.

A security source close to the area said the local hunters had actually sold the stolen cows in a local market in the area before they were apprehended.

It was reliably gathered that a woman spiritualist, who was invited by the Council chairman to help in a spiritual war against the bandits, had captured four Fulani herdsmen suspected to be bandits and recovered unspecified numbers of cows which were stolen by them. The cows, it was further gathered, were brought to Galkogo village, the camp of the hunters for safe keeping as instructed by the woman spiritualist when the local hunters decided to help themselves with some.

The woman spiritualist was said to have instructed that those cows be kept under close watch till after the Sallah break, when she would start a full scale war against the bandits in the area, as she intended to use the cows as point of contact and locate the hideout of the bandits. The woman spiritualist is said to have successfully carried out a number of spiritual wars against the bandits in parts of the state, leading to the killings of scores of bandits.

The latest was the killing of scores of bandits in Nupe kingdom of Niger state.

All attempts to reach the Chairman of Shiroro local government, Mallam Suleiman Chukuba, to confirm the story could not yield any result as all his mobile phones were switched off.