

Hunters, vigilantes hit bandits in Niger, kill 32, injure scores, lose 3 members

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From **John Adams**, Minna

No fewer than 32 bandits were on Monday evening killed in Kuchi community in Munya Local Government Area Niger State in what villagers said was the biggest success recorded by the joint security taskforce in the ongoing war against bandits.

The bandits who invaded the community at about 4:15pm on Monday in about 40 motorcycles were ambushed in a nearby bush about five kilometers to Kuchi town by the joint security taskforce codenamed “Special hunters” that are providing security within Munya and parts of Shiroro local government areas.

Reliable sources close to the community said after about three hours of gun duel, only 10 of the bandits who invaded in over 40 motorcycles were able to escape and with bullet injuries.

It was gathered that three members of the security taskforce, however, lost their lives and their bodies have been deposited at a government facility in Minna, the state capital.

The source stated further that bodies of the bandits were left in the bush, even as he disclosed that motorcycles and an undisclosed number of weapons used by the bandits were recovered at the battleground.

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It was further gathered that the joint security taskforce overpowered the bandits due to the reinforcement from its camp in Galkogo, midway into the battle, which he described as “real war.”

“The special hunters put up a brilliant fight against the bandits unlike last week when they (members of the taskforce) abandoned its camp due to the large number of bandits that invaded them. Their effort is highly commendable. Although they lost three of their members due to excessive bleeding from gunshot injuries, I can tell you that the battle was a huge success. They took the fight to the bandits unlike before when the bandits will just invade them unaware.”

Last Wednesday, bandits raided three communities in the same Munya local government area and unleashed terror on the people, dispossessing them of their valuables including cash worth over N20 million.

Shops were looted across the three communities of Zagzaga, Chibani and Kuchi and about 250 cattle were stolen by the gunmen who operated freely without any resistance. One person was killed and three boys were abducted to help them escort the stolen cows.

Two of the boys were said to have later escaped when the bandits stopped midway into the journey to share the stolen cows among themselves. The last boy has since reunited with his family in Zagzaga community.