

Bandits Kill Imam, 12 Others in Katsina, Niger Communities

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Francis Sardauna in Katsina and Laleye Dipo in Minna

No fewer than 13 persons, including children, have been massacred by bandits in fresh onslaughts on Shau and Ruwangodiya villages of Faskari Local Government Area of Katsina State, as well as Tasan -Kere and Tungan-Makeri communities in Rafi Local Government Area of Niger State.

The separate attacks on the two villages in Katsina State, according to residents, were perpetrated on Sunday about 6 p.m. when most of the victims were returning from their farms.

One of the residents, Mr. Aminu Hamisu, who confirmed the incident to THISDAY yesterday, said the bandits killed the Imam of Shau village and his assistant.

He said the bandits in a commando-style operation arrived the villages and started shooting sporadically, killing people at sight and razed property and rustled unspecified number of cows belonging to residents.

Hamisu explained that several villagers sustained varying degree of injuries from gunshots with scores of them, mostly women and children, still unaccounted for in the affected communities.

He said: "The bandits arrived at Shau village on no fewer than 60 motorcycles with each carrying three armed men about 6 p.m on Sunday and started shooting indiscriminately.

They killed eight people, including the Imam of Shau and his assistant.

"The bandits also set ablaze the vehicle of the village head and his entire house and many other houses in the village.

"After their successful operation in Shau village, they mobilised and moved to Ruwangodiya village where they killed two people there."

He lamented that they reported the arrival of the hoodlums to security agencies but that they did not come to their aid till after the bandits killed their people.

The state Police Public Relations Officer, Mr. Gambo Isah, who confirmed the incident said the bandits killed eight persons in Shau village and razed several houses and vehicle of the village head during the attack.

Isah, a superintendent of police, said combined security operatives were drafted to the area but the hoodlums escaped to the nearby forest due to the cumbersome nature of the place.

He said: "The bandits attacked Shau village and killed eight people and destroyed many houses, including the vehicle of the village head. Efforts are ongoing to ensure that the perpetrators are brought to book."

Meanwhile, three people have been confirmed killed with several others injured in attacks on two communities in the Rafi LGA of Niger State.

The incidents occurred between Saturday and Sunday night.

THISDAY learnt that the two communities attacked are Tasan -Kere and Tungan-Makeri. The bandits according to reports, first attacked Tasan -Kere on Saturday night during which they rustled about 200 cows.

It was learnt that when the cows were being rustled the local vigilante mobilised to recover the cows from the bandits leading to the bandits abandoning the cows and taking to their heels.

In the face-off between the bandits and the vigilante, some of the local security operatives were killed.

THISDAY gathered that angered by their inability to escape with the cows, the same set of bandits reportedly mobilised and launched a ferocious attack on neighbouring Tungan-Makeri community on Sunday night during which two villagers were killed and several others injured.

It was alleged that while the attack was ongoing, the village head of Tungan-Makeri alerted the security operatives but they (security) claimed they did not have fuel in their vehicles.

THISDAY was told that the angry villagers, yesterday morning deposited the corpses of the slain villagers in front of the office of one of the security agencies in the town.

When contacted, the Police Public Relations Officer for Niger State Police Command, ASP Wasiu Abiodun, told THISDAY: "I am in a meeting, I will get back to you."