

Over 40 bandits killed as 70-year- old woman leads hunters into battle

March 2, 2020 Daniel Atori Minna



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o fewer than 40 bandits were killed in an operation carried out by local hunters, led by a 70-year-old female spiritualist in Zuguruma, Mashegu Local Government Area of Niger State.

The raid, which lasted for just 30 minutes, has been described by villagers and eyewitnesses as, “a mysterious encounter,” which ought to have been capitalised on and used ever since.

Despite several efforts in the past months, it seemed like the operations by combined efforts of the military, Police and other security agencies against banditry in Niger State have been unsuccessful.

A witness told journalists that the state government had to go spiritual with the engagement of spiritualists and local hunters to fight the bandits who had besieged some local government areas in the state.

This breakthrough in the fight against bandits came barely a week after the state government declared a state-wide prayer in mosque and churches against men of the underworld, who have made lives unbearable for the people.

Two days after the prayers, bandits struck in Kagara in Rafi Local Government Area, killing a woman and her daughter and kidnaping scores.

A commander of the bandits and three others, who were said to have gone to town to buy recharge cards and other basic needs for the group, were later arrested and handed over to the state police command. They are currently under investigations.

The female spiritualist, before leading the operation, was said to have requested for some things, including a live dog whose blood was sprinkled on all the hunters before embarking on the operation. Two virgin boys led the way into the bandits' den.

She was said to have striped herself in a tent while preparing the sacrifice. One of the villagers, Mallam Alhassan, who narrated in Hausa how the operation went, said: "On approaching the location of the bandits, the woman instructed that the hunters should shoot into the air to provoke the bandits so as to lure them out from their hideouts."

This strategy, according him, paid off, as the bandits on hearing the sound of the gunshots, began to shoot towards the direction of the hunters but could not see anyone.

The villager added: "The bandits continued to shoot sporadically without aiming at any target until they ran out of bullets. That was when the hunters descended on them, killing 40."

Findings showed that while the operation was on going, the leader of the bandits scampered to hide on top of a tree. One of the bandits ran towards him, calling his attention to the invasion by the hunters, the woman ordered the hunters to immediately go after him. He was brought down with just a wave of hand.

The source added: “No single casualty was recorded on the side of the hunters who had volunteered to help the government eliminate all forms of banditry from the state within one month. All the weapons of the bandits, including machine guns, anti-aircraft guns, rocket launchers, among others, were recovered and handed over to the police.”

When contacted, the Deputy Police Public Relations Officer, Othman Umar, said that he was making efforts to reach the Division Police Officer (DPO) in charge of the community where the incident occurred.

Umar said, “I will get back to you as soon as I get the Divisional Police Officer, where the incident the occurred.”

As at the time of filling this report, no feedback was received from the police