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# Gunmen Kill 20 in Zamfara Robbery

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**The National Chairman of the All Nigeria People's Party, Ogbonnaya Onu.**

**By Chiemelie Ezeobi, with agency reports**

Some bandits, in a rage on Tuesday, attacked some communities in Zamafara State, killing 20 people. This area has perennially been plagued by violent clashes between vigilante and criminal groups, an official said.

“Twenty people were killed today (Tuesday) and two others were badly hurt by a gang of bandits in a raid on Kaboro village,” the state government spokesman Nuhu Salihu Anka, told AFP.

“The bandits stormed the village and began shooting indiscriminately,” he said of the attack in a remote area about 120 kilometres from Gusau, the state capital. It was a shooting spree by a fierce gang of armed men, who did not seem governed by a conscience or humanism. They appeared thirsty for blood.

After several people had been killed, the clan head, who had witnessed the indiscriminate shootings of his people, pleaded with the killers to end the firing. But the gunmen rather than being persuaded by the appeal of the clan chief, got infuriated the more and turned the muzzle of the gun on the old man, pulled the trigger, and in one explosive second, killed the man.

“The robbers shot (the chief) dead and then went from door to door seizing cash and other valuables before fleeing,” Anka said.

But throughout the rage, there was no intervention from either the police or any other

security agency. It is not certain how far or near the nearest police post is to the attacked communities. That part of the state has often fallen to the hands of bandits who operate in large numbers, with assorted arms and weapons. They operate with impunity because they know they can do so for as long as possible since the police are rarely around to dislodge them.

That point was made by the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP), which condemned the security lapses in the country.

The party expressed concern over the apparent failure of security forces to end the wanton killings of innocent Nigerians.

In a statement by its National Publicity Secretary, Chief Emma Eneukwu, the party said the impunity shown by the hoodlums during the raid, had exposed government's weakness in ensuring security of lives and property of the people.

"The impunity shown by village marauders in recent times in carrying out their evil missions has clearly shown that the Federal Government has failed in delivering the first service to the people; that of security of lives and property," he said.

According to Eneukwu, with so much money voted annually for security, "the party greatly wonders what other stimulus is needed by the security sector in order to structure a watertight and sustainable policing network that will include the hinterland, remote

settlements and other rural clusters".

The party urged the police to rise to the occasion of defending the populace.

Last June, a gang of robbers killed 23 people in the nearby villages of Dan-Gulbi and Guru, in a raid where some of the victims' throats were slit.

The June slaughter was reportedly carried out by gunmen seeking revenge against a community militia which had either countered the attack of the gang or repelled a planned offensive.

Locals said at the time that the vigilante force, which had grown tired of repeated robberies in the area, had killed several people they accused of being gang members.

Raids in Zamfara have previously involved scores of attackers. Up to 80 gunmen riding on motorcycles were reported to have carried out the June massacre, while in January, around 100 robbers killed and then burned the bodies of 15 traders as they returned from a market in another state.

The attacks have been usually characterised by violence and blood-letting. But neither the police nor any security agency has arrested members of the gang.

Northern Nigeria has also been hit by waves of attacks by radical Islamic group, Boko Haram, but the worst violence has been concentrated in the North-east and North-central

regions. Just last Sunday, a suicide bomber drove a bomb-laden car and hit St Rita's Catholic Church in Kaduna, killing 15 persons and injuring over 100 persons.

North-western states like Zamfara have largely been spared by the extremist group and there was no indication that Boko Haram was involved in the latest attack.

Last month, armed robbers opened fire on a group of people as they left pre-dawn prayers at a mosque in Kaduna State, killing about 20 people. A woman, the wife of the community leader, had her hands cut off by the robbers, just as the leader was killed.

Those killings were reportedly sparked by an ongoing rivalry between a community protection force and a group of thieves active in the area.

The scale of the violence in the North, including attacks blamed on Boko Haram, has prompted scathing criticisms from activists who have accused President Goodluck Jonathan's government of not doing enough to protect the population.

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