

PDP Suspends Zamfara Campaign over Fresh Attacks

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●Bandits kill seven soldiers, 14 civilians

Kingsley Nwezeh in Abuja

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Zamfara State has suspended its governorship campaign, following fresh attacks on some communities in the state on Monday by armed bandits.

The party's governorship candidate, Mr. Bello Matawalle, announced the decision at a news briefing in Gusau yesterday.

Seven soldiers and 14 civilians were killed by rampaging bandits in the state while terrorists killed three civilians in Adamawa when they attacked some towns, including Shuwa and Madagali Local Government Areas.

Matawalle said, "I want to announce that I have suspended all my campaign programmes due to the renewed rising bandits' activities in the state.

"I also wish to call on the government and security agencies to come up with practical measures that will adequately bring the bandits' activities to an end."

The PDP candidate, who expressed concern over the attacks, lamented that the situation was now taking a new dimension, where victims were particularly identified before being either killed, kidnapped or maimed.

However, an eyewitness of the killings, Mr. Usman Makama, said the hoodlums attacked the village head's house, where they killed one of his wives before moving into the village.

He said: "They put the gun in her mouth and blew up her head, after which they abducted the village head and one other person and then moved inside the village.

"This morning, we carried out the burial rites of 13 persons, including Ade, the district head's wife; and we were told that the bandits attacked two other villages of Tudun Wadan Mai Jatau

and Takoka where they killed scores.”

In a related development, the Nigerian Army has said it repelled Boko Haram fighters that attacked Adamawa towns and recovered weapons from fleeing terrorists.

Military sources said the soldiers were killed while engaging the bandits, who killed 14 civilians including a relation of Senator Kabiru Marafa from the state.

The attack took place Monday night in Bini Village of Maru Local Government Area.

The civilians were also killed Monday night in Tudun Wada Maijatau, Takoka and Ruwan Bore.

“The bodies of the soldiers were deposited at the Federal Medical Centre, Gusau while the civilians including a sister of Senator Marafa were buried yesterday,” said a source familiar with the incidents.

Meanwhile, the Nigerian Army said contrary to media reports, three people were killed during the terrorist attack in Adamawa Monday night.

It said in a statement: “In straightening the records, troops were alerted to an attack on Shuwa by Boko Haram terrorists who had infiltrated the village through Karchinga on a looting mission, to which the troops of 143 Battalion swiftly responded by mobilising themselves to Shuwa village, where they fiercely engaged the insurgents in combat and successfully repelled the attack and curtailed the incursion.

“The troops, who recovered one hand grenade and six rounds of anti-aircraft ammunition after the encounter are currently holding grounds in Shuwa village, while some elements of the battalion are exploiting further in pursuit of the fleeing insurgents.”

The statement signed by the Deputy Director, Public Relations, Theatre Command, Operation Lafiya Dole, Colonel Onyema Ugochukwu, said three people were killed during the attack.

It added: “Sadly, on the arrival of troops to the location, the insurgents had killed three persons, looted and torched a shop, a health care centre and a local market.

“It is pertinent to further inform that calm has been restored in Shuwa village, while Madagali, Michika, Gulak and Baza towns remain peaceful and firmly under control of the troops.

“Our hearts go out in deep sympathy to those who fell during the attack and those who have been affected in one way or the other by the incident.”

The Police in Zamfara also confirmed the killing of 15 persons and the kidnap of six women by gunmen in Gusau LGA of the state.

The Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO) of the state police command, Muhammad Shehu, made the confirmation in a statement in Gusau, the state capital.

Shehu said that on Monday, there was an attack in Wonaka, Ajja, Mada, Ruwan Baure, Doka, Takoka and Tudun-Maijatau villages of Mada district in Gusau area.

He said a woman was among the persons killed, adding that the attackers also kidnapped six women and a man.

He said: “Fortunately, with the efforts of police and sister security agencies, the abducted women have regained their freedom and have been reunited with their families.

“Normalcy has been restored to the affected villages, with improved deployment of PMF, CTU, special forces and military teams to the area to forestall further attack on neighbouring villages.

“The attack is presumably a reprisal to the attack on some Fulanis in a J5 vehicle on February 1, 2019 where seven Fulanis and their animals were killed and set ablaze by the outlawed ‘Yansakai.”