

# Bandits Kill Four, Kidnap Chief Imam, 20 Others in Niger

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## Laleye Dipo in Minna

Armed bandits have abducted the Chief Imam of Beni Central Mosque, Mallam Umar Mohammed and 20 others in Munya Local Government Area of Niger State.

This is coming as the state Governor, Alhaji Abubakar Sani Bello, has told security agencies to adopt new tactics in their fight against insurgency and banditry across the country.

The latest attack occurred four days after bandits killed an Army Captain and three others in an ambush.

The bandits, who were up to 50, were said to have invaded Beni Community in Munya LGA and Kudami in Paikoro LGA in the early hours of yesterday.

They were said to have met stiff resistance in Kudami but they had a field day in Beni where they looted shops, houses and kidnapped the Chief Imam on his way for a naming ceremony.

The invasion also led to the death of four others while several others were severely injured.

They are said to be receiving treatment at the Kafin Koro General Hospital.

The District Head of Beni, Alhaji Jafaru Umar Sarki confirmed the recent attacks.

He said that the invasion of the community by the bandits is the second in three days.

“They came three days ago and stole over 200 cows from Fulani men, and this morning (Wednesday), they came again in their numbers. As I speak to you now they are busy looting shops and moving from house to house and collecting people’s property.

“So far, four people have been killed, they shot another boy in the head and we don’t know if he will survive. They are so many in number, I cannot count them and they are all with guns.

“The unfortunate thing is that we informed the security agents about it after the first attack but up till now nobody came to our rescue. This community is

under siege at the moment and we are helpless,” he lamented.

Meanwhile, the state Governor, Bello, has told security agencies to adopt new tactics in their fight against insurgency and banditry across the country.

The governor’s advice came on the heels of escalating bandits’ attacks in some parts of the state which have left four soldiers dead and almost 2,500 people displaced.

In a statement on the recent attacks in Munya LGA, Bello called for “a fresh, holistic approach to be introduced by the security agencies in tackling banditry that has resurfaced in the state.”

In the statement signed by his Chief Press Secretary, Mary Noel Berje, the governor described the attack and loss of lives and property “as sad and unfortunate.”

Bello believed that “the bandits may have crossed the river from Kaduna to launch attack in Munya,” adding that “the issue of insecurity is a collective

battle which must not be left to the security agencies and government alone.”

He regretted that normalcy had earlier been restored to the affected areas until the recent attack by the bandits who were said to have laid ambush on the soldiers on routine patrol in the area.