

Bandits Invade Katsina Again, Massacre 34

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● As gunmen abduct Edo commissioner

Adibe Emenyonu in Benin and Francis Sardauna in Katsina

Suspected bandits invaded some communities in Dutsin-Ma, Danmusa and Safana Local Government Areas (LGAs), Katsina State Friday night, killing at least 34 residents during the onslaught.

In a similar onslaught yesterday, gunmen kidnapped the Commissioner Science and Technology in Edo State, Mr. Emmanuel Agbale while his security guard was killed during the operation.

Residents of the affected councils recounted their ordeals with THISDAY yesterday, disclosing that separate attacks took place on Friday night and Saturday morning at about 10:00 a.m.

The attacks took place only two weeks after some hoodlums killed 11 hunter while hunting in Danjin Giwa Forest, Kankara LGA

One of the residents, who privately spoke with THISDAY, disclosed that the bandits killed 17 people in Makarwaci, six in Kuraichi and two people at Dogonruwa villages in Dutsin-Ma LGA yesterday.

He, also, said the bandits "killed five persons at Daulai village of Safana Local government and four persons at Aidun Magoro village of Danmusa LGA.

"Many corpses have been deposited at the Dutsin-Ma General Hospital and the injured persons are also receiving treatment in the same hospital.

"The bandits invaded the affected villages because of the COVID-19 palliatives given to residents. They stormed the villages and collected all their foodstuffs on Friday.

"The residents got annoyed and mobilised themselves and burnt some camps of the bandits in the villages, which resulted into serious invasion by the bandits on Saturday morning," he said.

Apart from the cases of death recorded during the attacks, the source disclosed that many residents sustained varying degrees of injury while they were trying to escape from being killed.

Another credible source, blamed security agencies and the state government for not coming to their aid despite their earlier complaints of insecurity in the area.

The State Police Public Relations Officer, SP Gambo Isah could not be reached for comments. His telephone lines were switched off as of press time.

In the Edo incident, THISDAY learnt that Agbale, the state's Commissioner for Science and Technology, was kidnapped on his way to Ekpoma.

THISDAY checks revealed that the commissioner was kidnapped on Friday along Benin-Ekpoma road around Hartman Oil Palm Estate in Uhunmwode Local Government Area of the state.

An eye witness said the heavily armed men suddenly emerged from the bush and shot directly into Agbale's car which forced the driver to stop.

"They first killed the police orderly on the spot and abducted the commissioner to unknown destination", the witness said.

The State Police Command confirmed the incident yesterday, noting that the command has already put all machineries in motion to track those who kidnapped Agbale and would ensure that he is rescued unhurt.

The Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO) Mr. Chidi Nwabuzor confirmed the attack on the commissioner in a conversation with THISDAY yesterday.

Before he was reappointed to the State Executive Council in 2019, Agbale was Commissioner for Education, Edo State, and also Chairman, Esan Central LGA.