

Bandits Kill Pastor, Blind Man, Three Others in Niger

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Laleye Dipo in Minna

A pastor, one blind man and three others were killed on Sunday morning when bandits attacked some communities in the Shiroro Local Government Area of Niger state.

The church, which the deceased pastor was pasturing, was also burnt just like some houses in one of the affected communities.

Shiroro and Rafi Local Government Areas have been the epicenter of bandits attacks in the state, which has led to the death of scores of people with many others maimed.

The affected communities were Nankuna, Nansa Eburo and Lagodo in the Erena district of the local government area.

The Sunday morning attack also left several villagers injured with some others displaced following the burning of their houses by the bandits.

Eyewitnesses say not less than 1000 cattle were rustled by the invaders.

"They came in about 50 motorcycles and were riding dangerously round the communities at times shooting into the air," the eyewitness said on telephone.

He said the blind man was killed as he came out of the bush where he went to ease himself while the pastor was shot in front of the church before they set it ablaze.

The witness said there was no response from security operatives who were supposed to be on duty in the area

Efforts by THISDAY to get the reactions of the Niger State Police Command's Public Relations Officer, ASP. Wasiu Abiodun, were unsuccessful. Also, the cell phones of officials of the Niger State Emergency Management Agency (NSEMA) were not connecting.

Last week, a site engineer and three construction workers of an indigenous construction company were kidnapped from the same area by the bandits who later demanded for N1billion ransom.

The ransom was later reduced to N700 million on Sunday just as one of the victims reportedly escaped from the kidnappers when they were crossing a river in Kaduna State.

The State Ministry of Works where the site engineer works has not made any statement on the matter.

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