

27 Bandits Killed, Others Arrested in Kogi, Sokoto

● Three victims rescued, six killed in Sokoto ● Security agents close in on Kabba kidnap suspects

Onuminya Innocent in Sokoto

A total of 27 bandits terrorising some parts of Koton Karfe Local Government Area of Kogi as well as in Tangaza local government in Sokoto have been killed.

These were disclosed yesterday.

- ① In Kogi, officers of the State Vigilante Group killed 11 of them and arrested others, while in Sokoto, 16 of the criminals were killed.

It was also gathered that in Kogi, three kidnapped victims were also rescued successfully. According to a statement, in Kogi, security operatives acting on intelligence were said to have nabbed an officer of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, Inspector Abdullahi Saidu, who, alongside a friend, reportedly supplies the criminals with weapons and information to undertake their heinous crimes.

The successful operation by the security operatives was carried out in series working with credible intelligence.

A source within the Kogi State Vigilante Service said, "Alaiddi is their ring leader. He was killed during the first camp attack. Rabo and seven others were crushed. Madei and one other were killed in the second kidnappers' camp while Umar escaped with gunshot injuries but was recaptured."

It was also confirmed that five of the kidnappers who were arrested, including the civil defense operative, were in the custody of the Department of State Security for further investigations.

Reacting, the Chief Press Secretary to the Governor, Muhammed Onogwu, noted that such security success by the operatives was a welcome development and a proof that the security architecture of Kogi State was strong and solid enough to quash all forms of criminal vices.

He opined that the Local Vigilantes across the state had continued to record good results because of

the morale boost and support the governor had continued to give as well as the cooperation from the citizens and synergy between the security operatives.

Onogwu noted that the continued efforts of the Kogi State government to keep the momentum as the safest state in the country were so far yielding remarkable results, noting that the governor had severally made a commitment to securing the lives and property of the citizens and make the state a no go zone for criminal elements.

He reiterated that governments at all levels would continue to make efforts towards sustaining the drive for a peaceful

Kogi State by making every nook and cranny of the state unsafe for criminal elements and their sponsors.

In the same vein, security agencies are on the trail of kidnappers who were reported to have carried out attack on certain individuals in Kabba.

② Meanwhile, in Sokoto, in less than 48 hours after gun men suspected to be armed bandits killed two persons in Tangaza local government, gun men again launched another fresh attack on Sunday killing six persons in Saminaka in Tangaza local government area of the state.

But in response, the residents of Gidan Maadi and Tangaza both in Tangaza local government killed

about 16 suspected bandits terrorising the environment.

The angry residents made of youths and local vigilante members had on Saturday in response to the earlier attack by bandits on Friday evening mobilised to enter into the bush in pursuit of the said bandits.

A source who spoke with our correspondent from the local government confirmed that the search led to the apprehending of the 16 suspects, 10 in Tangaza town while six were apprehended in Gidan Maadi.

The source said after the suspects were initially handed over to the police and the news filtered into the town of the arrest, members of the said communities

demanding that they should be immediately killed by the police.

"When all efforts to convince the police to kill them was unsuccessful, residents overpowered the police in their station, seized the suspects and killed them all."

"Some of them who were believed to have supernatural power were even set on fire to ensure that they were all died" he added. Meanwhile, in what seemed like a reprisal attacks, suspected armed bandits reportedly attacked a village called Saminaka along Bale - Tangaza road and killed six people.

THISDAY gathered that the bandits stormed the village

yesterday afternoon and killed another six persons in the village.

Those killed in the Saminaka attacks according to a reliable source included children who were slaughtered as well as housewives who were shot while trying to run away.

"I am presently with the corps as I am talking to you now, they slaughtered the children like goats while the women were shot at while running away to escape from the bandits."

"The local vigilante people as I am talking to you now have pursued them into the bush and we pray those bastards will be captured and dealt with accordingly," the source said.

Fashola: FG Committed to Fixing Ota-Abeokuta, Other Roads

James Sowole in Abeokuta

The Minister of Works and Housing, Mr Babatunde Fashola SAN, has said the federal government, was not looking away on the deplorable state of the Ota/Abeokuta and other roads but committed to fixing them.

Fashola said the federal government was ready to borrow money to fix the bad road, which had elicited several protests by residents and motorists.

The Minister stated this during an inspection tour of ongoing construction of interchange bridges on the ever busy Lagos-Ibadan Expressway and the graphic presentation of the additional land to be required for it to the Governor of Ogun State, Dapo Abiodun.

The Minister, who was received by Abiodun at the Abeokuta/Shagamu Interchange, appealed to residents and motorists to exercise patience.

While the cost of reconstructing the entire road was put at N56 billion, Fashola said reconstruction of failed portion, which

would serve as palliative measure, would start and complete very soon and would cost N13.4 billion.

"We are not looking away on the condition of the Ota/Abeokuta Road unlike some people are saying. The Federal Government in conjunction with the Ogun State Government is committed towards fixing the road."

"Works would soon start to do palliative work on the failed portions and which shall be reconstructed so that when reconstruction of the entire road starts, it would not amount to waste of money but a mere joining of the portions to link each other," he explained.

The Minister asked Abiodun and his counterpart in Lagos, Babajide Sanwoolu, to prevail on lawmakers from the two states to speak in favour of the road, when debates on 2023 Budget proposal starts.

Also, Fashola hinted that the Mobile telecommunications giant, Globacom, has offered to reconstruct the 64 km Ota-Ikoro road in 2022, using the federal government Tax Credit Scheme.

"From Ota to Idiroko, we don't have a contract there, but Chief Mike Adenuga of Globacom has offered to construct that road using the tax credit system. So, that has also started, they are doing the design and hopefully, by sometime early next year, they should mobilise to site. The real reconstruction is going to happen if we have a deal with Glo," Fashola said.

He also said FERMA would carry out rehabilitation works on the Ota-Ikoro road between October and December.

"But between now and December, FERMA has gone to take measurements there and they will move there from the end of September if the Ogun State Government does two things. Clear all the squatters, traders and the settlers on the road and help us manage traffic and the governor as at last night has committed to doing that for us," the minister said.

He said efforts were on to bring in Flour Mills of Nigeria Plc and Unilever to reconstruct the Badagry link to the Lagos-Ota-Abeokuta road, also under

the Tax Credit Scheme of the Federal Government.

"I want to say once again to the people in all these areas, my deepest sympathy. I understand what you are going through, talking about it doesn't solve it, we are doing something about it and that is exactly what we have been doing with the governor," he said, adding that the Lagos-Ota-Abeokuta road had become a problematic road due to years of neglect by previous administrations, as such the highway required huge investment.

The contract on that road is N56 billion. It was awarded first in year 2000, about 21 years ago. Buhari was not President then. This administration has revived the contract and that is why it is fifty something billion naira, because at that time when it was a lot less, they didn't fund it.

"When people say Fashola is looking away, I am not looking away, I just can't find the money," he said.

Meanwhile, the federal government has begun to collaborate with the Ogun State government to secure the Right of Way (RoW) for

the construction of three bridges and an interchange on the Lagos-Ibadan expressway.

Fashola said the highway accommodated over 40,000 vehicles daily, hence the urgent need for additional flyovers and interchanges for decongestion, stating that, the bridges were under construction at Makun, MFM and Lotto (Mowe) areas on the Lagos-Ibadan expressway.

"We are trying to execute an interchange that will separate the main carriageway and give commuters choice, especially, those going to religious places to worship, those going to universities and so on and so forth. So that what used to cause the congestion is limited to the barest minimum if not totally eradicated when the road is finished."

"So, we now require additional land to build the interchange, that is why I called the governor (Dapo Abiodun)," he said, even as he expressed satisfaction with progress of work on the ongoing reconstruction/rehabilitation of the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway.