

Terrorists Attack Niger Communities, Kill Several Villagers, Kidnap Priest, Others

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Laleye Dipo in Minna

An unspecified number of villagers were killed in several communities in Munya Local Government Area of Niger State when terrorists invaded the villages between Sunday afternoon and early Monday morning.

The terrorists also kidnapped a Catholic priest, Rev. Leo Raphael Ozigi, and some clergymen who ran into the gunmen as they were returning to Minna after the Sunday service held in one of the communities.

This is even as the terrorists have now reportedly set up a camp at Kuchi town.

THISDAY gathered that the bandits raided Chibani, Injita, Tsohon Kabula Jesso, as well as Gini and Gunu.

The gunmen, according to THISDAY findings, rode on more than 50 motorcycles, with all of them carrying sophisticated guns.

At a point, it was learnt that they blocked the bridge linking the local government area with Shiroro Local Government from where they carried out their operations.

It was when the gunmen were on the bridge that the Catholic priest and other clergymen ran into them leading to their abduction.

From the bridge, it was gathered that the terrorists moved to Chibane where they set up their camp from where they launched attacks on the communities.

They forced several houses open, burgled food barns and stores and made away with several items, an eyewitness said.

He said though there was a military and other security posts at Sarkinpawa, the headquarters of the local government, there was no counter offensive against the terrorists.

The Secretary of Munya Local Government, Mr James Jagaba, in a telephone interview on Monday confirmed the incident, saying the terrorists have been operating unhindered for several hours, "even now they are still there".

"Nobody can tell you the number of people already killed or kidnapped. All I know is that there are casualties," Jagaba said. When contacted, the Commissioner for Local Government and Internal Security, Mr Emmanuel Umar, also confirmed the incident, saying a statement would be issued on the matter soon.

The state Chairman of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Niger State chapter, Rev. Mathias Echioda, also confirmed the kidnap of the Catholic priest and others.

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