

In Broad Daylight, Terrorists Kill 63 in Zamfara Communities, Buhari Directs Military to Sustain Offensive against Criminals

Francis Sardauna in Katsina

Terrorists have massacred no fewer than 63 persons in Damri, Sabon-Garin Damri, Kalahe, Faru and Kauyen Minane farming communities in Bakura and Maradun Local Government Areas of Zamfara State in separate fresh onslaughts on the farming communities.

This was just as President Muhammadu Buhari yesterday directed the security agencies to sustain the current offensives against terrorists and other criminals operating in the north-west region particularly in certain parts of Zamfara State.

THISDAY gathered that 56 people were killed by the terrorists in Damri, Sabon-Garin Damri and Kalahe communities in Bakura local government last Friday while seven were massacred in Faru and Kauyen Minane in Maradun local government.

A resident of Kalahe, Ibrahim Usman, who confirmed the Friday attack to THISDAY in a telephone interview yesterday, said the terrorists invaded the communities with sophisticated weapons at about 2:30pm and started shooting sporadically.

Although, police authorities and the state government were yet to confirm the attacks, a chieftain of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in the state who craved anonymity, said terrorists had killed more than 70 people in the affected communities.

Usman explained that the terrorists carried out what appears to be coordinated attacks from Sabon Garin Damri, Damri and Kalahe for about one hour before a joint security team repelled them.

He added that a 13-year-old girl, Police officer and personnel of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) were among those killed in Damri community by the motorcycle-riding terrorists.

He related that the terrorists also invaded a primary healthcare facility in a Damri community, where they killed two patients who were receiving treatment in the hospital.

He said, The terrorists

attacked the communities in a large number riding on their motorcycles on Friday afternoon at about 2:30pm. As of Saturday morning, we counted 56 dead bodies. They also set ablaze an operational Hilux vehicle belonging to the Police.

"They killed three people; a girl, a police officer and another officer with the NSCDC in the Damri community. Two patients at our healthcare centre were also killed while the remaining 51 people were killed by the terrorists in Sabon Garin Damri and Kalahe.

"Some of the victims were not residents of the three

communities. They were people who came from nearby villages to celebrate Eid El Fitr with their relatives. They have been buried according to Islamic rite."

Barely 28 hours after the terrorists killed 56 people in three villages in Bakura Local Government Area of the state, the hoodlums stormed Faru and Kauyen Minane villages in Maradun Local Government Area of the state where they killed seven other villagers.

A resident of Faru village, Kamilu Tanko, who confirmed the fresh onslaught on Faru and Kauyen Minane villages

on Sunday, said the deadly attacks occurred on Saturday at about 3pm.

He said: "Six people were killed in Kauyen Minane while one was killed in Faru. I was at the Maradun General Hospital when soldiers brought their corpses. Number of those killed may increase because many are still missing in the affected villages".

He said the seven people killed were male farmers, stating that four of them were killed at the outskirts of the Kauyen Minane village while returning from the farms.

Meanwhile, Buhari, in a

statement yesterday, noted that while there appeared to be relative calm in Zamfara, with situations returning to normal in most parts and the rural communities ready to live their lives normally again, there had been several breaches, especially in view of the terrorists' attack on Damri, Sabongarin Damri and Kalahe villages in Bakura Local Government Area, and lately, Maradun.

According to him: "We mustn't allow the return of days when the bandits had a free hand to do as they wished. The rural folk in Zamfara and

elsewhere must be allowed to have peace."

The president, therefore, directed that the momentum that had been developed by the security agencies be sustained in order to bring an end to the activities of the murderers.

While expressing condolences to the families of the victims as well as the government and people of the state, Buhari further ordered that the combined efforts of both the federal and state governments must do all that could be done to bring an immediate end to the horrific killings.

SERAP Sues Buhari, Wants Court to Declare Pardon for Dariye, Nyame Illegal

Udora Orizu in Abuja

The Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) has filed a lawsuit against President Muhammadu Buhari, asking the court to declare illegal and incompatible with the oath

of office and public interest the recent pardon granted to former governors of Plateau State, Senator Joshua Dariye, and Taraba State, Rev. Jolly Nyame who are serving jail terms for corruption.

Dariye and Nyame were recently pardoned alongside

157 others convicted for various offences. The two men were investigated, prosecuted and convicted for stealing N1.16 billion and N1.6 billion respectively from their state treasuries, while they were in office between 1999 and 2007.

However, in the suit number FHC/L/CS/825/2022 filed last Friday, at the Federal High Court, Lagos, SERAP wants the court to determine whether the exercise of the power of prerogative of mercy to grant pardon to Dariye and Nyame was compatible with

the public interest, the oath of office, and constitutional duty to combat corruption.

SERAP also sought for an order setting aside the pardon granted to Dariye and Nyame in the public interest, and for the sake of the integrity, well-being and prosperity of Nigeria, and the country's international obligations.

The suit filed on behalf of SERAP by its lawyers Kolawole Oluwadare and Opeyemi Owolabi, read in part: "The pardon power, if properly exercised, can help to protect citizens against possible miscarriage of justice. Section 15(5) of the Nigerian Constitution of 1999 (as amended) provides that 'The State shall abolish all corrupt practices and abuse of power. Article 26 of the UN Convention against Corruption to which Nigeria is a state party requires the government to ensure 'effective, proportionate and dissuasive sanctions' including criminal and non-criminal sanctions, in cases of grand corruption.

Article 26, complements the more general requirement of article 30, paragraph 1, that sanctions must take into account the gravity of the corruption offences.

Buhari Travels to Abidjan for Two-day UN COP-15 Conference

Accompanied by four ministers, NSA, three other top officials

Deji Elumoye in Abuja

President Muhammadu Buhari is leading an eight-man Nigerian delegation to Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, to attend a two-day United Nations organised conference on the future of land, regarding desertification, drought, degradation, rights, restoration and implications for national and world economies.

According to a statement issued yesterday, by presidential spokesman, Mallam Garba Shehu, Buhari, who is also the President of the Great Green Wall in Africa, was accompanied on the trip by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Geoffrey Oryema, Minister of Environment, Mohammed H. Abdullahi, his Agriculture

counterpart, Dr. Mahmoud Mohammed and Minister of Water Resources, Engr Suleiman H. Adamu.

Also, on the president's delegation are the National Security Adviser, Major General Mohammed Monguno (rtd); Director General, of the National Intelligence Agency, Ambassador Ahmed Rufai Abubakar and Chairman/CEO of Nigerians in Diaspora Commission, Abike Dabiri-Erewa.

Buhari, who would participate in a Summit of Head of States and Government from May 9th to 10th, 2022, joins world leaders at Sofitel Hotel Abidjan, for the 15th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP15) of the United Nations Convention to Combat

Desertification (UNCCD), with the theme "Land. Life. Legacy: From scarcity to prosperity."

Top items on the agenda of the conference are drought, land restoration, and related enablers such as land rights, gender equality and youth empowerment.

The convention aims to take action to ensure that land, the lifeline on the planet, continues to benefit present and future generations.

To achieve the visionary objective of land restoration and balance, COP15 will bring together leaders from governments, the private sector, civil society and other key stakeholders from around the world to drive progress in the future of sustainable management

of one of the most precious assets, land.

The convention would explore links between land and other key development issues, which would be discussed during the high-level segment, including a Heads of States Summit, high-level roundtables and interactive dialogue sessions.

COP 15 is a key moment in the fight against desertification, land degradation and drought. Accordingly, it would build on the findings of the second edition of the Global Land Outlook and offer a concrete response to the interconnected challenges of land degradation, climate change and biodiversity loss as the world steps into the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.