

## Bandits abduct 100 miners, kill 10 in Zamfara — Emirs

ON MARCH 11, 2021 6:58 AMIN **NEWS**

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**\*Deploy more security men to areas affected by herdsmen attacks, banditry, Senate tells NSA**

**\*Take fight to B-Haram enclaves, Reps tell military chiefs**

**\*Army has achieved commendable success against terrorism, banditry, others – COAS**

**\*Sokoto bans self-acclaimed security volunteers**

**By Henry Umoru, Levinus Nwabughiohu & Musa Annabi**

No fewer than 100 miners operating between Anka and Maru Local Government Areas of Zamfara State have been abducted by bandits.

Emir of Anka, Alhaji Attahiru Ahmad, who spoke on behalf of other members of the state Council of Chiefs as chairman, disclosed this when the Chief of Defence Staff, CDS, General Lucky Irabor, led service chiefs on an assessment visit to the state

governor, Bello Mohammed (Matawalle Maradun), Tuesday. The emir added that the bandits also killed 10 persons during an invasion of a mining site in the state.

The emirs spoke as the two chambers of the National Assembly, Senate and House of Representatives, yesterday charged the National Security Adviser, NSA, Major General Babagana Monguno, and the new service chiefs to deploy more men to areas affected by insurgency, herdsmen attacks, banditry and kidnapping and take the fight to the criminals.

But the Chief of Army Staff, Lt.-Gen. Ibrahim Attahiru, said the Nigerian Army has not done badly, noting that the agency had achieved commendable successes in the fight against terrorism, banditry and other forms of criminality across the country.

### **‘Jangebe abduction overshadowed that of miners’**

However, speaking the service chiefs’ visit, the emir said the incident which occurred on March 2, was over-shadowed by the abduction of the 279 GGSS, Jangebe girls by another gang of bandits which took place on the same day.

“The bandits have been attacking those involved in artisanal mining and carting away their money and property.

“There is a disconnect between miners and bandits in the state, so we were surprised when the declaration of ‘no fly zone’ was recently slammed on our state over suspected arms supply and illegal mining when the state does not even have an airport.

“We know that there are states with more security challenges than Zamfara and we expected that if such order would be issued, it should also cover such states.

“Our artisanal miners, who are licenced, have been very helpful to the state’s economic growth and they have played significant roles in ameliorating the hardship faced by IDPs in the state by supporting them,” he said.

The emir, who called for more security personnel to fight banditry in the state, noted that “the peace and dialogue initiative of our governor has become necessary because at the moment, we have less than 5,000 security men fighting over 30,000 bandits,” he said.

He, however, assured the service chiefs that people in the state will continue to pray for their success and urged the CDS to ensure there is synergy among all segments of the military during operations in order to block all escape routes against the criminals.

Responding, the CDS commended the role played by the traditional rulers in fighting crime and urged them to continue to engage their subjects in giving credible information that would lead to the containment of bandits.

On his part, Governor Matawalle assured that his administration would intensify its peace and dialogue as well as support the security agencies in sustaining the onslaught against unrepentant bandits.

## **Senate tasks NSA, Monguno**

Reacting to the continued cases of banditry and kidnapping in the country yesterday, the Senate called on the National Security Adviser, Major-General Babagana Monguno, retd, to immediately deploy more security personnel to communities affected by the activities of the bandits and suspected herdsmen.

According to the Senate, this will help to avert looming humanitarian crisis that will likely rear its head as a result of the displacement of residents.

The Senate also called on the National Emergency Management Agency, NEMA, the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and the Border Communities Development Agency, BCDA, to undertake an ‘on-the-spot’ assessment of the affected communities, with a view to determining the extent of the problem and providing relief to the affected persons.

While urging the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs to, as a matter of urgency, establish IDP camps in Bena and render support to those affected, the Senate charged the National Security Adviser and all agencies involved in internal security to increase deployment of security agencies to reverse the ugly situation.

Resolutions of the Senate were sequel to a motion on the displacement of residents following the invasion of their communities by bandits and suspected herdsmen.

Presenting the motion, Senator Bala Ibn Na'Allah (APC, Kebbi Central), noted with concern the rising humanitarian situation in Bena, Kebbi State, arising from the activities of bandits in neighbouring Zamfara State which shares common border with Kebbi State.

“The internally displaced persons from about 17 villages in Zamfara, sharing the border with Kebbi State, have moved to Bena, Wasagu, Mage areas with no arrangements for an Internally Displaced Persons, IDP, camp and are scattered all over, making it difficult to cater for their welfare,” he said.

### **‘We need to unite against criminality’**

Contributing, Senator Rochas Okorocha (APC, Imo West), urged Nigerians to unite against the perpetrators of criminality by refusing to associate with criminal activities.

Okorocha said: “The happenings in the South-West, vis-à-vis issue of herdsmen, have become a recurring decimal, and literally what we discuss almost every week at this red chamber.

“Mr. Senate President, I’m a bit concerned that this issue is gradually creating a wall of division in our country. Therefore, in the handling of this matter, we must be absolutely very careful.

“I rise to speak that a criminal remains a criminal in whatever form or shape he or she comes. We must learn to separate criminals from where they come from, and deal with them as criminals, such that when we mention herdsmen, it does not look like a Fulani man attacking a Yoruba man; or when we mention kidnappers, it does not mean that somebody from the South or South-East is attacking the north; or when we mention Boko Haram, it does not look like the north is attacking others.

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“So, we must be very careful because these bunch of criminals are gradually finding their way in creating a wall of division. The unity of this country is very key at this moment and we must do everything to protect it.

“One thing that gives me concern is that I keep wondering that we do not have more than 50,000 criminals in this country from the records I have seen. How can 50,000 criminals defeat 200 million people?

“It then means that the 50,000 criminals are united, while the 200 million people are divided. We need to unite and be able to tag these criminals by their names and not by where they come from. In that case, we shall be winners in this battle.”

### **Take fight to B-Haram, Reps charge military**

Similarly, the House of Representatives also asked the military authorities to re-strategize and take the fight against Boko Haram directly to their enclaves.

The House made the call while considering a motion sponsored by Abdulkadir Rahis at yesterday's plenary.

It noted the resurgence of Boko Haram attack on Maiduguri, Borno State, on the evening of February 23, 2021, which resulted in the death of 16 persons and injuring of 60 others currently receiving treatment in various health facilities across the city.

Adopting the resolution, the House resolved to send a delegation to commiserate with the victims and the government of Borno State.

It also urged the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development and the National Emergency Management Agency, NEMA, to provide relief materials to the victims of the attack, and other interventions to all those who suffered losses and damage to properties.

### **‘Army has achieved commendable successes’**

Meanwhile, the Chief of Army Staff, Lt.-Gen. Ibrahim Attahiru, said yesterday that the Nigerian Army has achieved commendable successes in the fight against terrorism, banditry and other forms of criminality across the country.

Attahiru stated this at a familiarisation visit by the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Defence, Mr Musa Istifanus, and the directors of the ministry in Abuja.

He said the Army had also continued to build the requisite capacity for its personnel to be able to perform their duties effectively.

The COAS, however, solicited for continuous support of the ministry in the areas of manpower efficiency, capacity development as well as provision of adequate equipment and weapons system for operational efficiency.

“Your maiden visit to the Army Headquarters, aside from encouraging the officers and soldiers, speaks volumes of the interest you have in our activities and operations.

“I want to inform you that the Nigerian Army has achieved commendable successes in the war against Boko Haram, banditry and other forms of criminality across the country, while also building requisite capacity for our officers and soldier.

“Let me assure you that the Nigerian Army under my leadership will continue to defend the territorial integrity of the country, including advancing our national interest, in line with our constitutional responsibility, despite attendant constraints,” he said.

He expressed sincere appreciation to the minister for his leadership direction and the overwhelming support the army had been getting from the ministry.

“As you may be aware, my vision is to have a Nigerian Army that is repositioned to professionally defeat all adversaries in a joint environment.

“To achieve this vision and drive on the pillars of my strategic plan, I will require your support,” he said.

Earlier, the Permanent Secretary, Istifanus, said the purpose of the visit was to familiarise with the new Army chief and assure him that the ministry intends to support his vision.

He said that the ministry is determined to give the Army the necessary cooperation that would bring total peace to Nigeria and guaranty safety and welfare of all Nigerians.

He commended the military for the sacrifice to ensure that the nation is safe and secure as well as ensuring that peace returns to different parts of the country.

“We will continue to stand behind you to support you 100 per cent,” he said.

## Sokoto govt bans 'Yan Sakai'

Also yesterday, Sokoto State government banned the activities of self-appointed security outfit, known as Yan Sakai, from operating as protectors of vulnerable communities.

Governor Aminu Waziri Tambuwal, who handed down the order while sympathizing with the people of Tarah village in Sabon Birni local government area who lost about 15 people to bandits attack recently, said the state government would establish a vigilante group that will assist security agents in the discharge of their duties.

According to him, the reason for this order is to forestall attracting reprisal attacks from the bandits and the need to impress it on the people of the area not to take the laws into their hands.

He appealed to the people of the area to continue to cooperate with security agents deployed to the area for special assignment to flush out criminals in the area.

The governor noted that he inaugurated Operation Puff Adder at the police command headquarters last week, adding that the state government provided the police with vehicles and other logistics to enable them perform their duty effectively.

Commending the Inspector General of Police, Mohammed Adamu, for deploying 305 mobile police personnel to the state, the governor applauded other security agents in the state for working harmoniously with the aim of establishing peace in the state.

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