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Gunmen on rampage in Enugu, Kebbi, Ogun, abduct 40

By Adesina Wahab, James Ogunnaike & Ikechukwu Odu

LAGOS — Gunmen on rampage have in the past two days, kidnapped no fewer than 40 persons in Kebbi, Ogun and Enugu states, killing two policemen in the process.

While the kidnap of 30 students and teachers of Federal Government College, Birnin Yauri, Kebbi State, and four Chinese railway workers took place yesterday, six residents of Aquamade Village, Eha-Amufu, Isi-Uzo Local Government Area of Enugu State, were allegedly abducted on Wednesday.

The two slain policemen were killed in the kidnap attacks in Kebbi and Ogun states.

Gunmen storm Kebbi school

On the Kebbi attack, Vanguard learned that the

bandits stormed the school around 12:30pm, and engaged the mobile policemen guarding the school in a gun duel.

In the process, one of the policemen was said to have been shot dead by some of the bandits, while others invaded the school premises from behind.

While some of the students were reportedly wounded in the shootout, five teachers, including a female and the school's vice-principal, were said to be among the students taken away in a bus belonging to a parent.

A teacher in the school told Vanguard that they received information days before yesterday's attack that there was a plan by bandits to invade Birnin Yauri community.

According to the teacher who pleaded anonymity, the information informed the deployment of a detachment of mobile

policemen to the school to ward off any attack.

The teacher said the policemen were, however, overpowered in the shootout that ensued between them and the bandits.

He said after abducting the victims, the bandits used a bus belonging to the parent of the student who came to the school to pick his son who was to write JAMB on Saturday, to evacuate them.

He said in the confusion that ensued after the attack, the school authorities were unable to conduct a headcount to ascertain the number of the abducted students.

But it was gathered that at least 30 students and three teachers were taken away by the bandits.

"All I can tell you now is that one of the policemen guarding the school was killed. Many of our students, both male and female, were abducted by

the bandits. It is a co-educational school; you know, it is a Federal Government College.

"Three or four teachers of the college were abducted. Out of the abductees, there is a vice-principal and a female teacher. Two students, a male and female, were shot by the bandits. The boy was shot in the buttocks, while the girl sustained a gunshot injury on her arm."

'Police after the bandits'

Confirming the attack, the state police command said a combined team of police operatives was in pursuit of the bandits.

Police Public Relations Officer of the command, DSP Nafi'u Abubakar, who confirmed the attack and abduction, said: "The team, comprising operatives from the Police Mobile Force, Anti-kidnapping and Counter-terrorism units are currently combing nearby forests, routes and suspected hideouts of the criminals."

"The Kebbi State Commissioner of Police, CP Adeleke Adeyinka, condemned the attack. The attack resulted in the death of one policeman and gunshot injury to one of the students."

"The command is following credible leads and intensifying efforts to track the assailants and ensure the rescue of the missing students and teachers."

The commissioner of police also appealed to residents of Kebbi to assist the police with prompt information that would aid in apprehending the criminals.

He assured the public that the command would

do everything within its power to ensure that the abducted persons "are safely reunited with their families and perpetrators brought to book".

"The truth is that the attack took place and five teachers have been taken away, four male and one female, but the number of students abducted are not known yet."

"The attack took place around noon and during the crossfire between police and the bandits, some students had been injured and one police officer was also injured and another was killed. These are the facts I can give to you," he said.

The police commissioner said the school principal who should provide details of the number of students abducted was still in shock.

"The principal is not in the best state of mind as I am speaking to you now, because parents have trooped into the school searching for their children. So the principal cannot make proper head count call," he added.

NAPTAN to use local hunters

Recall that no fewer than 700 students have been abducted in the school attacks since December

2020.

Reacting to the abduction, National Parent Teachers Association of Nigeria, NAPTAN, which expressed frustration at the development, said it was already in talks with local hunters to help secure schools across the country, following the apparent failure of government and its agencies.

The National President, Alhaji Haruna Danjuma, who was reaching to the abduction of some students of the Federal Government Girls College, Birnin Yauri, Kebbi State, noted that state apparatus to protect schools had failed.

"Only yesterday, Wednesday, we sent a delegation to Abuja to meet some security experts and local hunter groups to discuss the way forward in securing our schools. As parents, we cannot just fold our arms and watch our schools shut down by the activities of those who are opposed to the growth of education in the country."

"We hope to quickly conclude arrangements with the hunters and we will draw them to help secure schools in their localities. The public security apparatus seems unable to

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President Muhammadu Buhari with Governor Babagana Zulum and other officials at the Maiduguri Air Force Base, during President Muhammadu Buhari's one-day working visit to Borno State, yesterday. Photo: Ndahi Marama.



People Talk

By Providence Adeyinka & Cynthia Alo