

Fury as bandits attack NDA

● Kill 2 officers, kidnap one, injure another

● NDA vows bandits'll be apprehended ● I suspect insider collaboration — CDS ● NDA invasion worrisome — Col Agbede ● No where is safe any more in Nigeria, bandits are in total control — Retd AVM Ararile ● This should be turning point in fight against banditry — Brig Gen Usman

By Kingsley Omonobi, Dapo Akinrefon,
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ABUJA — Shock, disbelief yesterday trailed attack on Nigerian Defence Academy, Kaduna, by bandits who killed two officers, kidnapped one and injured another who is currently receiving treatment in the hospital.

Among those who reacted, beside the NDA which in a statement said it would hunt down the bandits, were the Chief of Defence Staff, CDS, Major General Lucky Irabor, Kaduna State government, Arewa Consultative Forum, ACF, and Col Samuel Agbede, who saw the attack as not only worrisome but also a frightening development.

The bandits had broken into the school around 1:25am yesterday, shot sporadically and made for the officers' quarters to abduct the personnel.

A military sources said two officers were killed, one abducted, another injured in the attack was currently receiving treatment in the academy's hospital while two others were abducted in the attack.

The source said: "On August 24, 2021, at about 0125hrs, bandits in their large numbers attacked NDA, Afaka, and kidnapped one officer; Maj Datong, while Lt Cdr Wulah and Flt Lt CM Okoronwo were shot dead.

"2Lt Onah sustained

gun shot injury and is currently receiving treatment at own hospital in NDA."

Explaining how the bandits gained access into the school, another source said: "They came in, silently, through the part of the school where we have barbed wire and not properly fenced.

"Unfortunately, there were no soldiers on guard duty at that end. So, the bandits sneaked in to where the officers were and got three of them.

"It was when they shot one of the officers that

everybody woke up, and before we knew it, they had made their way outside and fled.

"The attack is a big slap on our face. How could we have allowed that? They already knew there was no guard on duty and came in through that axis."

It was, however, learned that the sound of the gunfire by the bandits alerted troops of NDA Quick Response Team, who arrived at the scene, but were unable to rescue the kidnapped officer as the bandits had already gone with the victim.

According to the source, the school authorities will

court-martial some soldiers for failing to secure the area.

Reacting to the attack, Bashir Jajira, spokesperson of the academy, in a statement also explained how the security architecture was compromised at the institution.

He said: "The security architecture of the Nigerian Defence Academy was compromised early this morning (yesterday) by unknown gunmen who gained access into the residential area within the Academy in Afaka.

During the unfortunate incident, we lost two personnel and one was abducted.

Bandits'll be apprehended — NDA

"The Academy in collaboration, with the 1 Division Nigerian Army and Air Training Command as well as other security agencies in Kaduna State, has since commenced pursuit of the unknown gunmen within the general area, with a view to track them and rescue the abducted personnel.

"The NDA community and Cadets are safe in the Academy. We assure the general public that this unknown gunmen would soon be apprehended and the abducted personnel rescued."

I suspect insider collaboration

— CDS

Also reacting to the attack, the Chief of Defence Staff, Major General Lucky Irabor, said the incident was worrisome, adding that the military was looking into it with keen interest.

Major General Irabor, who did not rule out insider collaboration, said the military authorities would get to the root of the attack.

His reaction came at a

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one-day interactive session with retired senior military officers from the North East zone at the 23 Armoured Brigade in Yola, Adamawa State.

NDA invasion worrisome — Col Agbede

Reacting to the attack, Col. Samuel Agbede, retd, said such an attack had never happened in the history of the Nigerian military.

Agbede, a former President of the Yoruba Council of Elders, YCE, said: "This attack just signifies that the chicken is coming home to roost. All our calls and cries for proactive actions against insecurity have been confirmed by this worrisome invasion.

"It is very worrisome that bandits could have the audacity to attack a military academy and kill officers. This has never happened in the history of the military that bandits could have the effrontery to attack a military academy. This is too disgraceful and it is just confirming what we have been saying about fifth columnist. We have seen why we should not allow those Boko Haram insurgents into the

Continues on Page 27



Vice President Yemi Osinbajo (m) cutting a tape to inaugurate Niger Delta Power Holding Company Limited, 2. X 60MVA, 132/33KV at Agu -Awka Anambra State, yesterday. With him are Governor Willie Obiano of Anambra State (left) and Managing Director and CEO Delta Power Holding Company Limited, Mr. Chiedu Ugbo.

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Continues from Page 5
military. It is like putting fire on our thatched roof.

"It is time to look up and gather elders together to do something about this issue. It is dangerous to leave governance of 200 million people in the hands of one man. To say that we have a Major General as our Commander-in-Chief and this is happening is very worrisome.

"Just like we have been crying, these bandits are everywhere. We should stop dancing around for politics. It is disgusting. We really have problems and we should not wait until they overrun Aso Rock. We still appeal to the federal government to gather people together to address the insecurity in the country."

No where is safe any more in Nigeria, bandits are in total control — Retd AVM Ararile

In his reaction, His Royal Majesty, Retired Air Vice Marshall Lucky Ararile, the Ovie of Umiagwa Kingdom in Delta State, said: "The brazen attack by bandits on NDA, killing of soldiers and abduction of a military personnel shows that no where is safe in Nigeria anymore. It shows that bandits are in total control.

"We are not sure that even Aso Rock or any military unit is safe any longer. Government has to tackle these bandits or whatever they call themselves with the seriousness it deserves. These embarrassments are becoming too much."

This should be turning point in fight against banditry — Brig Gen Usman

Similarly, Brigadier General Sani Usman, ret'd, former Director, Army Public Relations, said: "It is very disturbing. I believe this should be a turning point in the fight against banditry and these criminal elements. But I think the bandits' have made a terrible mistake. They have crossed the line; they will regret it.

"I am so happy that all hands are on deck over this issue. Though I am not in possession of the full details, but I think the military will respond appropriately. I heard that the CDS and service chiefs have visited the academy.

"It is a worrisome issue, it is really disturbing but I am so sure about the capacity and capability of the military to deal with the situation.

In his reaction, a security expert, Major Bone Efozien, ret'd, called the Federal Government to redress the trend in order to avert a scenario that is playing out in Afghanistan, describing the attack as brazen.

Efozien, who is the Man-

aging Director, Strict Guard Private security, said: "What we are seeing is the result of over fraternisation of the military with certain characters that Nigerians should have dealt with squarely.

"When we are talking about combat issues, it is not all about the ability to fight but to create a certain impression and perception of one's capabilities. When people think you are very strong, the tendency is that they will not attack you. But when people know your strengths and weaknesses, then, there is a tendency to attack you.

"The Nigerian military, particularly the Army, has been over exposed to the criminal and common man in Nigeria, to a point that anybody can wake up tomorrow, walk into an Army barracks and open fire.

"When it got to the level that certain people claimed to have repented, even after years of attacking the Nigeria nation and institutions and are being reabsorbed into the Armed Forces, thereby exposing them to the same training as our serving personnel, equipping them with the same equipment as our serving personnel, giving them the same combat readiness and awareness, what do you expect?

"When these people leave there and they talk to their colleagues, what do you think they tell them? They tell them there is nothing special about these people, we can attack them. The incident in Kabul will naturally have a spillover on Nigeria's challenge. Afghanistan's Taliban is fighting based on Islamic beliefs. A lot of these fighters in the northern part of Nigeria are fighting based on Islamic beliefs.

"So, to a large extent, what happened in Afghanistan will embolden them to attack government institutions. If the Taliban could attack and overrun Kabul without resistance, then expect such in any of these countries where the Islamists are fighting.

"Whether they will succeed or not is another story. But they know that there is nothing special about the military, and they feel they can attack and over run them. That is what is happening in Nigeria today.

"We should all be alert. If you watch what is happening in the north, you will see that even the state governments in the northern part of Nigeria are already admitting that the federal government no longer has the state apparatus to defend the citizens and are, therefore, calling on citizens to defend themselves.

"What Federal Government should do is to think of how to redress the trend. It might not be anything serious. But there is need for a reorientation of military personnel and a kind of image building that will

re-boost confidence in the personnel."

Kaduna govt condemns attack

Also disturbed by the attack, Kaduna State government appealed to citizens to volunteer useful information to the military and security agencies in the campaign against banditry and kidnapping.

The Commissioner for Ministry of Internal Security and Home Affairs, Samuel Aruwah, said in a statement: "Being the host of the Academy and a partner in several spheres of national security and development, Governor Nasir El-Rufai has been briefed of the development, and on behalf of the government and People of Kaduna State, has prayed for the repose of the souls of the personnel who lost their lives.

"The governor conveys heartfelt empathy to the Academy, and to the immediate families of the personnel, and also extends deep concern to the family of the abducted officer.

"Furthermore, the government of Kaduna State extends its unreserved solidarity to the Armed Forces of Nigeria and all security agencies who are making immense sacrifices on different fronts.

"The government hereby appeals to the good citizens of the state to volunteer useful information to the military and security agencies in the campaign against banditry and kidnapping, in the state and beyond. On its part, the Kaduna State government will continue to take actions considered imperative in the campaign against bandits throughout the state."

Nigeria's security on reverse gear — ACF

Meanwhile, the Arewa Consultative Forum, ACF, has expressed shock over the attack on the Nigerian Defence Academy (NDA).

ACF said the invasion and desecration of the factory where all Nigerian military officers are produced, was an indication that Nigeria's national security system was running on reverse gear.

ACF's National Publicity Secretary, Emmanuel Yawo, said in a statement that the founding fathers of Northern Nigeria who brought NDA to Kaduna, did not bring it for the present generation to hand it over to bandits.

The statement read: "The ACF, first and foremost, commiserates with the families of those who lost their lives during today's (yesterday) attack on the Nigerian Defence Academy. These gallant men have paid the supreme price for Nigeria, their motherland. We hope their sacrifices are not in vain.

"The Forum is praying

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Cross section of party supporters of the embattled National Chairman of the People's Democratic Party, Prince Uche Scondus rallying in his support following a Port Harcourt court ruling that suspended him from office at the PDP National Headquarters, Wadala House, Abuja, yesterday. Photo: Abayomi Adeshida.

that the abducted officer will be rescued and the criminals who abducted him brought to book.

"The latest security breach is another embarrassment to the ACF. The NDA is a proud monument of the efforts of the first generation of Northerners who fought hard to bring development to the North; the likes of Muhammadu Ribadu, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa and Sir Ahmadu Bello who brought the institution to Kaduna.

"They did not bring it here for our generation to hand it over to bandits or whatever we call them. This is an institution that is not only a pride of the North but also a pride of Nigeria. Many African countries train their military officers here.

"It is really sad that ordinary street bandits will invade a military institution of such high national and international repute, outwit the security system and men there, kill officers and take one away to an unknown destination.

"We of the ACF are particularly sad because Kadu-

na is our home not only because our headquarters is located here but also for a long time, even after the split of our Northern region, Kaduna remained home to all northerners.

"The NDA is a proud reminder of the achievements of our fathers. Is that how our present generation of northerners will seat and watch as these legacies are destroyed?

"We of the ACF have said it again and again that there is everything seriously wrong with the management of our security. The other day, a Nigerian Airforce fighter aircraft was shot down by the so called bandits.

"Today, the factory where all Nigerian military officers are produced has been invaded and desecrated. What else do we need to show that our national security system is running on reverse gear?"

Similarly, speaker of Kaduna State House of Assembly said the attack on NDA was an assault on Nigeria's territorial integrity.

The speaker, Yusuf Ibra-

him Zailani, in a statement signed by his media aide, Ibrahim Dahuru Danfulani, said the attack must be treated with all seriousness.

The statement read: "NDA is Nigeria's premier training citadel for Nigeria's Armed Forces, a pride to the country and Africa, hence such a daring attack on the institution is unacceptable and must be investigated by the military hierarchy. It is disheartening and unfortunate for such an attack to have taken place, catching those in charge of its internal security off guard."

While commending Nigeria's security personnel for making efforts to decimate bandits and insurgents nationwide, the speaker said they should not let the NDA incident demoralise them.

"I sincerely commiserate with families of those who lost their lives. I am pleased that the NDA authorities have given assurance that the assailants are being trailed and would be apprehended," he said.

PIA: No more exclusive petrol importation rights for Dangote, BUA, says FG

By Sebastine Obasi

LAGOS — The Federal Government appears to have reversed the exclusive petrol importation rights for holders of local refining licence to import petroleum products, following the signing into law of the Petroleum Industry Act, PIA.

Current holders of crude oil refining licences in Nigeria include Dangote Oil Refinery Company, Waltersmith Refining and Petrochemical Company Limited, OPAC Refineries, Niger Delta Petroleum Resources, BUA Refinery and Petrochemicals and Edo Refinery and Petrochemical Company Limited. It was learned that stakeholders in the oil and gas sector had raised concerns over the line in the Senate's version of the PIB.

According to the upper chamber's committee report on the PIA, the legislators had intended to limit the importation of petroleum products to local refining licence hold-

ers. This, however did not go down well with industry stakeholders.

Section 317 (8) of the senate version of the report noted that petrol importation licence will be restricted "only to companies with active local refining licences". "The Authority shall apply the Backward Integration Policy in the downstream petroleum sector to encourage investment in local refining," the senate version read. "To support this, licence to import any product shortfalls shall be assigned only to companies with active local refining licences. "Import volume to be allocated between participants based on their respective production in the preceding quarter."

It was learned that the exclusive right had been removed in the Petroleum Industry Act, PIA, which was signed into law by President Buhari on August 16.

Consequently, "qualified" refiners or companies can now participate in the impor-

tation of petroleum products.

According to the Act, Section 317 (8), petrol importation licence will be granted to holders of refining licence or companies with "proven track records of international crude oil and petroleum products trading".

"The Authority may apply the Backward Integration Policy in the downstream petroleum sector to encourage investment in local refining."

"Pursuant to subsection (8), licence to import any product shortfalls may be assigned to companies with active local refining licences or proven track records of international crude oil and petroleum products trading.

"Import volume to be allocated between participants shall be based on criteria to be set by the Authority taking into account their refining output in the preceding quarter, the share of active wholesale customers competitive pricing and prudent supply, storage and distribution track records," it read.