

Bandits on the rampage, kill 11 in Taraba, abduct over 100 in Zamfara



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Terrorists led by one of their kingpins, Damina, have attacked some villages in Zamfara State, kidnapping over 100 villagers just as 11 persons were killed in Taraba State by suspected bandits.

The terrorists stormed Mutunji community, Friday, killing a local and abducting their victims including women and children.

It was learnt that the bandits had imposed over N100 million-levy on farmers before they would be allowed to access their farms.

The incidents were said to have taken place at Mutunji, Unguwar Kawo, Kwantar Dutsi and Sabon Garin Mahuta in Dansadau axis where Damina operates.

A local source told BBC Hausa the gang leader led his men on motorcycles and surrounded the community a few minutes after the dusk prayer at 8:00 p.m.

According to him, “we were sitting in a place called Yar Kasuwa after the Isha’i prayers when the terrorists stormed the community. They surrounded the community while others drove into the community centre. We began running but it was already too late. They matched people into the forest. Men, women and children were abducted.”

Another source also said, “They attacked other communities including Unguwar Kawo, Kwanar Dutsi and Sabon Garin Mahuta and took away several people. We’ve at least 100 people taken. We’re still counting to ascertain the true number of those taken.”

The source said Damina attacked Mutunji because the village failed to give him N50 million he asked them to pay as compensation for “informing soldiers” of bandits’ movements.

The kingpin was said to have given the residents a week to gather the money but the source said they couldn’t gather it.

“We were trying to gather the money reaching out to people when he, Damina, decided to strike “He had also imposed such levy on the other communities. Kwana residents were asked to pay N30 million, people of Sabon Garin Mahuta were asked to gather N20 million while residents of Unguwar Kawo were asked to pay N10 million,” he said.

Police spokesperson in the state, Yazid Abubakar, did not respond to calls on his mobile phone. Meanwhile, when contacted, the spokesperson for 1 Division of the Nigerian Army, Lt.Col Musa Yahaya, said the area is under the 8 Division of the Nigerian Army.

Similarly, rampaging bandits attacked communities in Yangtu and Ussa Local Government Area, LGAs, of Taraba State, killing 11 people.

The attacks, which happened Friday, resulted in the death of nine people in some communities in Yangtu Special Development Area and two others in Tukwog community along Takum-Manya Road.

Chairman of Ussa Local Government Area, Peter Shamwun, who confirmed the development, raised the alarm that the bandits have laid siege to Takum-Ussa Road, threatening more lives. A survivor, Yakubu Tinya, who spoke to newsmen, said the attackers came in numbers, shooting sporadically.

The spokesman for Taraba State Police Command, Superintendent of Police, Abdullahi Usman, also confirmed the report.

He further said a joint patrol of the police and military were patrolling to forestall further attacks. In a related development, Borno State governor, Babagana Zulum, called on North-East governors to collaborate in order to overcome insecurity in the region.

Reacting to the incident, Taraba State governor, Dr. Agbu Kefas, condoled with the families of victims and communities in Yangtu and Ussa LGAs.

A statement by his Special Adviser on Media and Digital Communications, Emmanuel Bello, urged security agencies to ensure terrorists are defeated in affected areas.

The statement said:” He, Governor Kefas, has promptly directed the Deputy Governor and top security heads to visit the troubled area to seek lasting solutions.

“He said he would not tolerate the threats to lives to continue under his watch. Consequently, Kefas noted that he was doing everything humanly possible to bring an end to such carnage in the state .”

Speaking during a meeting of North-East governors aimed at addressing challenges in the area in Yola, Zulum stressed the need for renewed commitment in the fight against insecurity, poverty, and underdevelopment in the area.

He further urged federal government to lend support to the region in addressing key issues

such as the poor state of roads, the lack of functional rail lines, and underutilisation of waterways