

Sokoto residents protest bandits attacks



By Musa Ubandawaki

SOKOTO—Hundreds of men, women, and children in Shagari Local Government Area of Sokoto State have staged a mass protest, blocking the Sokoto–Lagos trunk A highway, over the worsening bandit attacks in the state.

They said that criminal gangs were now in control of many local government areas of the state, leaving residents devastated, displaced, and increasingly hopeless.

They expressed anger over relentless attacks that have crippled their communities and demanded urgent government action to stem the tide of killings and abductions.

The displaced residents, some barefoot and visibly traumatised, poured into Shagari town, the council headquarters, chanting slogans of frustration as they narrated their ordeal.

According to them, the government has abandoned them to the mercy of bloodthirsty gangs, who roam their villages unhindered.

A resident of Rinaye village, Malam Kasimu, explained, “For three consecutive days, bandits have been invading our villages. They kidnapped our community leader and our Imam after killing three people over the weekend.”

He disclosed that the armed groups attacked Aske Dodo, Tungar Barke, and Jandutse villages, killing two persons and abducting no fewer than 15 others.

“Several of our villages have now been deserted. People are fleeing in all directions, leaving behind their homes and farmlands,” he added.

Among the displaced is Rabi Shehu, a mother of 5, from Jandutse village, who recounted her harrowing experience.

“Since the attack, I have not been able to locate my children. We all ran in different directions to escape the gunmen. Now, I have nothing to eat, no shelter, and no idea where my children are. We just want peace and security to return home,” she cried.

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The scale of devastation has been confirmed by the National Emergency Management Agency, NEMA, and the Sokoto State Emergency Management Agency, SEMA.

Officials from both agencies visited about 30 homes currently sheltering displaced persons.

They also held discussions with traditional rulers, including the District Head of Dundaji, Malam Muhammad Magaji, and the Head of Tungar Barke, Muhammadu Tudu, both of whom have themselves been displaced.

Other villages badly affected by the onslaught include Lungu, Tungar-Doruwa, Zango, Yan Yandu, Tungar Na'anza, and Ila, where survivors recount killings, abductions, and widespread destruction of livelihoods. Entire farming communities are now ghost settlements, fueling fears of worsening hunger and economic collapse in the region.

However, the Special Adviser to the Sokoto State Governor on Security Matters, Aminu Bodinga, confirmed the "unfortunate happenings" in the affected communities and acknowledged the protests in Shagari.

He assured that the government was taking steps to restore peace, though residents remain skeptical given the scale of destruction already recorded.