

Traditional Ruler, Son Kidnapped In Kwara



The kidnapped monarch

By Mumini Abdulkareem, Ilorin

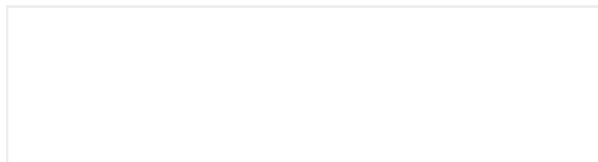
Thu, 1 Jan 2026 14:56:07 WAT



Gunmen shot the wife of a traditional ruler and abducted the monarch alongside his son during an attack on a palace in Aafin community, Ile Ire District, Ifelodun Local Government Area of Kwara State.

The attackers also killed another resident in a nearby community in Isin Local Government Area while fleeing the scene. Both incidents occurred on New Year's Eve.

The abducted traditional ruler was identified as Simeon Olaonipekun, while his son, Olaolu, is said to be serving under the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) scheme.



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A witness who was inside the palace during the incident said about eight gunmen stormed the premises in the evening and immediately opened fire.

“We noticed strange movements outside and alerted everyone inside. Doors were locked and lights switched off, but once they realised this, they started shooting heavily,” the source said.

According to the eyewitness, the attackers forced their way into the palace after breaking down doors and repeatedly demanded to see the monarch and his wife.

“They kept asking for Kabiyesi and his wife. While trying to force their way in, the Olori was shot in the arm,” he said.

The source added that several family members and visitors who had come to spend the holidays with the monarch were inside the palace and went into hiding to avoid being hit by stray bullets.

“One of the monarch’s sons later came out with the injured queen in an attempt to prevent further violence. That was when they took both the monarch and his son,” he said.

The eyewitness noted that the leader of the attackers spoke fluent English, adding that they appeared to be focused on their targets. “They were not asking random questions,” he said.

After the gunmen left the palace, the injured queen was rushed to hospital for medical attention.

Local vigilantes were unable to repel the attack due to their small number and the superior firepower of the assailants. “Only two vigilante members were on duty at the time. They could not match the attackers,” the source added.

Confirming the killing in Isin Local Government Area, a community leader, Alhaji Rafiu Ogunlade, said the gunmen shot dead a plumber while exiting the area.

He identified the victim as Mr Dele Ogundipe, who handled the community water facility, and said he was killed around 10 p.m. near an ECWA church in Oke Aba.

“They had earlier sent messages to communities around, warning of an attack on New Year’s Eve. That was why many people stayed indoors and avoided crossover services,” Ogunlade said.

He added that the attackers struck the Aafin palace around 7 p.m. before heading towards Isin, a distance of about eight to 10 kilometres.

“They met Dele on his way to open the community water supply and shot him in front of the church. He was a gentle and hardworking man who served the community diligently,” he said.

Ogunlade condemned both the killing and the abduction of the traditional ruler and his son, describing the incidents as a serious breach of security.

When contacted, the spokesperson of the Kwara State Police Command, SP Adetoun Ejire Adeyemi, confirmed that the command had received reports of the incidents.

She said details were still being compiled and assured that further updates would be provided as investigations continue.

Daily Trust reports that the incidents occurred less than 24 hours after the state government warned of possible attacks during crossover services and the New Year holiday.

In a statement issued on Wednesday by the Commissioner for Communications, Bolanle Olukoju, the government said the warning followed intelligence reports indicating that criminal elements planned to target government infrastructure and other soft locations in retaliation for recent security operations.

“The advisory has become necessary following credible intelligence reports that some bad-faith actors are planning to hit government infrastructure or other soft targets,” the statement said.

Residents were advised to limit non-essential movement and avoid large gatherings during the festive period to reduce exposure to potential threats.