

# Bandits kill one, kidnap two residents in Kwara

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Date: 7 Oct 2025

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## • Ododo visits Isanlu-Esa, vows to defeat criminality in Kogi

Bandits have killed one, kidnapped two others, including the village head of Rani in Patigi Local Council of Kwara State.

A reliable source said the assassins arrived at the village on Sunday evening while the residents were about to observe Maghrib prayer.

“They came in the evening at about 7.00 p.m. They met us at the mosque while we were getting ready for maghrib prayer,” he said.

He lamented: “Security situation here in Rani village (Patigi) remains tense; we are still where we are.”

In a related development, there was a media report that suspected hoodlums have killed a pastor with the Evangelical Church of West Africa (ECWA), Rev. James Audu Issa, in Ekati village, also in Patigi council area.

Eyewitnesses said the assailants killed the cleric after collecting ransom from his family.

According to reports, Issa was abducted on August 28.

His abductors allegedly demanded a N100 million ransom. The family, however, bargained and paid N5 million to secure his release.

It was after receiving the money that the kidnapers demanded additional N45 million. “They later killed him before further talks could resume,” another source stated.

An anonymous community leader described the killing as a “disturbing escalation” in the operations of criminal gangs in Kwara North, lamenting that residents now live in fear and despair.

He said the brutal murder of the pastor highlights the growing impunity of bandits, who continue to terrorise rural areas with kidnapping, extortion, and killings.

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Also, the founder of Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, Dr Abdur-Raheem Oladimeji, has urged tolerance and perseverance over the rising insecurity in parts of the state.

Assuring that kidnapping and other ravaging of Kwara would not overwhelm it, he stated that banditry and kidnapping for ransom were a phase well designed by unscrupulous elements to destabilise the state.

Oladimeji conveyed the assurance in a statement in Ilorin, yesterday, in response to the recent security breaches in some communities in the Kwara North and South Districts.

He urged residents of affected communities not to lose hope in the government's and security agencies' ability to tame the roughnecks and restore peace to their communities.

The founder described the terror campaign as an “unconventional warfare that requires tactics and wisdom on the part of the military to tackle.”

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Similarly, Kogi State Governor, Ahmed Usman Ododo, yesterday, visited Isanlu-Esa in Yagba West Local Council, with a resolve to stamp out criminal activities in the area.

The visit followed recent cases of kidnapping and killing along Okunran, Okoloke, and Isanlu-Esa communities, which have heightened tension in the council area.

Welcoming the governor, Commander of the Nigerian Army in charge of Operations, Brigadier General K. U. Sidi, commended the combined efforts of the security agencies, including the Army, Navy, Air Force, Police, Department of State Services (DSS), and special forces in combating criminality in the area.

He appreciated the governor for his sustained support of the security agencies, noting that the provision of logistics and other assistance had strengthened their capacity to secure the area.

He also acknowledged the “invaluable contributions” of the Hybrid Force from the Office of the National Security Adviser to the ongoing operation in Yagba West.

The traditional ruler of Isanlu-Esa, Oba Olufemi Ogunremi Theophilus, thanked the governor for personally visiting the community, describing the trip as a demonstration of responsive and responsible leadership.

The royal father appealed to security agencies to maintain their presence in the area until criminal activities were completely eradicated.

He called on the Federal Government to fix the road leading to the community to facilitate free movement and enhance security operations.

In his remarks, Governor Ododo commended the gallantry of the security agencies and sympathised with families that lost loved ones to the recent attacks.