

Bandits kill three, kidnap Catholic priest, imam, others

February 8, 2026 12:56 am

Bandits

FILE: Bandits

By Godwin Isenyo

Discover more [Business news section >](#) [Health and wellness products >](#)

[Nigerian fashion clothing >](#)

Fresh waves of violence hit Kaduna State on Saturday as suspected bandits abducted a Catholic priest and 11 other persons, while three residents were killed during an early morning attack on Karku community in Kauru Local Government Area of the state.

The Chief Imam of Janjala Central Mosque, Bello Abdullahi, and a Fulani community leader, Shehu Bello, were also abducted during attacks in Kagarko Local Government Area of the state.

The Catholic Archdiocese of Kafanchan confirmed that the kidnapped priest, Nathaniel Asuwaye, is the parish priest of Holy Trinity Catholic Church, Karku.

Sunday PUNCH gathered that Asuwaye was taken alongside 10 other villagers during the attack.

The incident, which occurred around 3:20am on Saturday, was described by residents as a coordinated invasion by heavily armed terrorists who stormed the community, shot sporadically and whisked their victims away.

The Chancellor of the Kafanchan Diocese, Jacob Shanet, announced the abduction in a statement on Saturday, calling on Christians and people of goodwill to pray for the victims.

“Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, with deep sorrow, we announce the kidnapping of our priest, Rev. Fr. Nathaniel Asuwaye, the parish priest of Holy Trinity Catholic Church, Karku, Kauru LGA of Kaduna State,” Shanet said.

He added that the priest was abducted alongside 10 other residents during the attack, which left three people dead.

The deceased were identified as Jacob Dan’azumi, Maitala Kaura and Alhaji Kusari.

According to the diocese, the attackers invaded the priest’s residence and nearby homes, leaving the community in shock and fear.

“This terrible event has resulted in the killing of three people, aside from those abducted,” Shanet lamented.

The diocese urged prayers for the safe release of the abducted victims, saying, “We invite all priests, Christian faithful and men and women of goodwill to pray for Fr Nathaniel, the other abducted persons and for the repose of the souls of those killed.”

Related News

Residents protest as bandits abduct seven in fresh attack in Kaduna

JUST IN: Seven abducted Kwara construction workers regain freedom

Banditry hurting economy, we’ll defeat it — Tinubu

Reacting to the incident, the Chairman of the Northern Christian Association of Nigeria, Rev Joseph Hayab, described the attack as another grim reminder of the worsening security situation in the region.

“This is a sad story. The kidnapping of Christian priests and innocent citizens is becoming unbearable despite all efforts to curb this evil,” Hayab said.

Security sources at the Kaduna State Police Command said a joint team of the military and police had engaged the attackers in gun battles in the Kauru axis.

“We believe the bandits have not left the area. With God’s help, we are hopeful they will be apprehended,” a police source said.

Meanwhile, Sunday PUNCH gathered that the attackers who kidnapped the chief imam invaded several villages, including Iddo, Gidan-Makeri, Kohoto and Janjala, abducting residents and rustling cattle, forcing many villagers to flee their homes.

A community leader, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the most recent attack occurred around 9pm on Tuesday, noting that the gunmen were heavily armed with AK-47 rifles.

“They went straight to the house of the chief imam and took him away. From there, they moved to the house of the Fulani leader. That was when people started running for their lives,” the source said.

Residents said panic gripped the area, with many families fleeing to Kagarko town and Sabon-Wuse, while others reportedly slept in the bush overnight.

The abductions came days after the bandits allegedly issued a seven-day ultimatum, demanding ₦6m ransom for a previously kidnapped woman and her four children, a deadline community leaders said expired without security intervention.

Efforts to get confirmation from the police proved abortive as the Police Public Relations Officer, Mansir Hassan, could not be reached for comment, as his telephone line was unreachable when dialled.

Similarly, messages sent to his phone had yet to be delivered as of the time of filing this report.