



■ A textiles seller attending to customers at Kwari textiles market in Kano, yesterday.

PHOTO SANI MAIKATANGA

# Police freed suspected killers of women, children – Witness

From Hir Joseph, Lafia

A witnesses yesterday alleged that nine women and children as well as elderly men of Hausa origin were murdered in Bassa in two separate invasions of the settlement by those he alleged were members of “Ombatse militia group.”

Haruna Usman Maimaoko, a 44-year old lecturer said “during one of the attacks, nine members of the Ombatse group – one Isiaka Adamu Dangwate and eight others were apprehended by the residents of Yelwa a neighbouring settlement, who handed them over to the military that were sent to patrol the area.

“The suspects were subsequently handed over to the police who transferred them to Lafia. The police, after a very short time, released these deadly culprits back to the community.” He was led to make the submission by three counsels appearing for the Hausa community, namely, bar-

rister Yakubu Hassan, James Agbo, and Idris Yusuf.

Bassa, a farming community of various ethnic groups, including Hausa, Eggon, Tiv, Gwandara and Fulani, is in Kokona Local Government Area of Nasarawa State.

He said the invasions took place on March 8, and also in April, during which the cult allegedly went on killing a spree, burning and maiming to avenge the murder of an Eggon, one Simon Kigbu. He said the late Kigbu was killed along the road by suspected armed robbers, sparking the chain of mayhem on various settlements in Bassa because they felt the deceased was targeted because he is Eggon.

The History lecturer from the College of Education, Akwanga, who presented a memo for and on behalf of Hausa community of Bassa, also said a reprisal attack was launched on Eggon communities of Bassa by Fulani militia, leading to series

of such bloody confrontations between Eggon and Fulani, but did not say whether Hausas also joined in the crises.

He said “Ombatse group see themselves as the militant defenders of Eggon interest.” He said the palace of the traditional ruler of the Hausa community of Yelwa, as well as that of Sakwato, Bassa, and Akware, were razed down in the serial attacks. He also said five Fulani camps: Rugan Alhaji Jibrin, Rugan Ibrahim Mantau, Rugan Sule Alkali, Rugan Ardo Buli and Rugan Alhaji Dodo were also invaded and their people killed, and properties worth millions of naira burnt.

“Those killed included women, children and the aged, and so many people were also injured,” he said adding that the Hausa people of Bassa are still seeking justice. “We want justice. That is why we are here.”

The commission continues sitting tomorrow.