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'How kidnappers gouged my brother's eyes after killing him'

By Ronald Mutum & Maryam Ahmadu-Suka, Kaduna | Publish Date: Jan 28 2017 5:16AM

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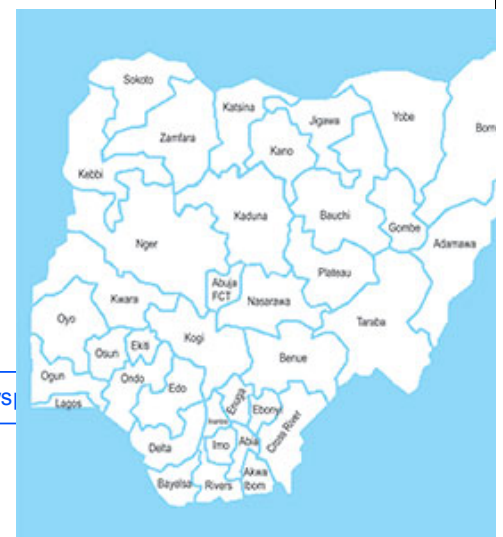
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On Monday, 16th January, 2017, Muhammad Bello Dalhatu, a 35-year-old Bureau De Change (BDC) operator in Kaduna left his family home located on Zango Road, Tudun Wada in Kaduna State, for Abuja, where he operates. The seventh child of an aged mother was one of three passengers kidnapped alongside his friend Kabir on Abuja-Jere road around 7pm on that day. The driver of the vehicle was robbed of some valuables, but was not kidnapped, Daily Trust gathered.

The kidnappers demanded for N5million ransom, which the family was trying to raise when the news of his death broke. He was killed on Sunday, 22nd January, 2017. It was gathered that an unidentified senator also had his relations in the kidnappers den and he was said to have paid N10 million to secure their release.

Speaking to Daily Trust, Mai Ungwa Sadiq Hamza, the deceased's elder brother, said he was in talks with the kidnappers whom he told raising N5million would not be possible. "When I told the kidnappers, who were communicating with me either in broken English or Hausa, that we cannot raise the ransom, but could raise N50,000, he said 'Na your mama you go give that one; you go lose your relation if you no pay'."

"Muhammad was our mothers favourite, he does not eat until she has eaten and she always asks after him when he is not around. On that day he left, he stocked his house with food items for his wife Zainab and their two children Abubakar (4) and Saudat (1) as if he knew he was going to die."

On how the family heard of his death, he said, "Some women who were also in the kidnappers' den told us. They are the ones whose ransom the senator paid. They told us that the kidnappers asked all of them to leave after the N10million was paid and that when my brother stood up, they shot him in the head."

The ladies also revealed to the family that the kidnappers gouged out Muhammad's eyes and removed some other parts of his body. The family has not been able to recover his body for a proper burial.

On if the incident had been reported to the police, he said, "The other victims have made statements and reports at the Bwari police station, but as for us, we have not made any report because we believe that our brother is in the hands of Allah."

Muhammad's young brother, Shamsudeen Dalhatu described the deceased as a jovial person and one with no enemies.

Daily Trust further learnt that Muhammad Bello Dalhatu may be the victim of a notorious gang of kidnappers who regularly attack travellers along the Jere-Abuja highway.

Jere, in Kagarko Local Government Area of Kaduna State, sees heavy vehicular traffic during weekends, being a shorter route to Kaduna.

The armed robbery and kidnapping gang on Monday 16th January 2017 laid siege on the highway between Jere and Bwari and embarked on an operation that lasted hours.

A victim of the attack, Halilu Usman, narrating his ordeal, said the armed robbers adopted a bizarre kind of profiling of their victims before kidnapping them. He said they were stopped along with several other vehicles by the kidnappers and dispossessed of phones and any cash they could find. Thereafter, they were ordered to lie down, adding that the kidnappers proceeded to separate passenger in vehicles based on the flamboyance of their attire. He said they proceeded to carry out a harrowing interview, asking each passenger about his occupation and asking other passengers to verify same.

Usman said the kidnappers took away those they deemed wealthy, based on their appearance and occupation. He said he was left lying on the asphalt while two



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people in the vehicle travelling with him from Kaduna to Abuja were taken away into a nearby bush by the kidnappers. He also said he noticed that two women in another car stopped by the kidnappers were taken away.

FCT Police spokesman ASP, Anjuguri Manzah said the issue falls under the jurisdiction of the Kaduna State Police Command. Kaduna State Police Command, ASP Aliyu Usman promised to call back with a response but has not done so at the time of filing this report.

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