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# Farmers in fear as bandits invade Katsina villages

By Idris Mahmoud, Katsina | Publish Date: Apr 13 2018 2:00AM

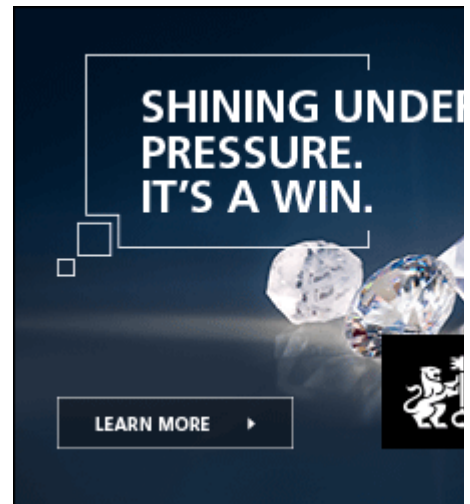
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As the rainy season approaches, some farmers particularly in the southern part of Katsina State are entertaining fear of armed bandits who have recently been unleashing terror in the area.

People in towns and villages bordering Kaduna and Zamfara states are no longer sleeping with their two eyes closed as the bandits have been robbing, kidnapping or killing them.

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Dr. Mohamed Hebbaz  
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Alhaji Ya'u Dauda Nasarawa, a farmer, told Daily Trust that many farmers who had farms in the areas of Maganda, Kaduna state and Jiruwa, Dandume LGA had ruled out cultivating their fields this year.

"Last two weeks the bandits brazenly warned some farmers who went for farm clearance in Maganda. And robbery along Funtua-Dandume road is gradually becoming a daily occurrence," Mallam Ya'u said.

Daily Trust went round some of the affected villages in the area and discovered that the bandits had instilled fear in the people, making some of them skeptical to speak to the press. But Mallam Hamza of Kalagi village, Sabuwa LGA narrated his ordeal in the hands of kidnappers in the last two months, saying they first came and robbed his brother and other members of the family of their money, clothes, shoes and handsets.

"After some time the bandits came back one Thursday two months ago around 1:30am. Their target was my elder brother who managed to escape on hearing their gunshots. After robbing the entire house they went away with me for three days in Dansadau forest (Zamfara State) before they bargained with my relatives and collected N1,400,000 for my release," Mallam Kalagi said.

He added that they hardly spend a month without an incident like this in the area.

According to the people in Maibakko Sabuwa LGA, in the last three months bandits have been robbing passengers along Gamji-Maibakko-Sabuwa road.

Mallam Yakubu Mohammed said, "Incidents often occur on Dandume or Sabuwa markets days when passengers are dispossessed of their money and other belongings."

At Tashar Labo, Sabuwa LGA, bandits killed one Alhaji Ibrahim Tanimu (Garkuwan Sabuwa) and shot another man, Alhaji Mu'awiyya, in the thigh.



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The son of the deceased, Adamu Ibrahim, said that on the night of 27th March, Fulani bandits wielding Ak47 rifles invaded the village, killing his father and injuring one Alhaji Mu'awiyya.

"The marauders quietly infested the village, positioning themselves in vantage points of attack. One elderly man sighted them and raised the alarm, which attracted Alhaji Mu'awiyya to come out. At a point not far from his house he got shot twice in his left leg. They entered our house and shot indiscriminately at the door and window of our father's room, killing him. They later asked our youngest brother to take them where our father was keeping his money, and after searching the room without getting any cash they fled," Adamu said.

He added that this was not their first time of attacking his late father as eight months ago they came and wounded him with machete after robbing him of a large sum of money.

In Albasu Daddagushi of Dandume LGA, two wives of one Alhaji Na Annabi were abducted in the last two weeks and up to the time of filing this report they had not been released.

One Alhaji Abdullahi confirmed the abduction of the two women, saying, "Two wives of my elder brother were abducted from their marital home and negotiation for their safe release is ongoing."

Similarly, in Ilalla village of Dandume LGA, the Fulani bandits abducted Alhaji Kabiru Idris on 29th March, a situation that shocked his aged mother to death.

His younger brother, Muhammad Ghali Idris, said Alhaji Kabiru had been a diabetes patient for about ten years.

"The bandits first came in the second week of March and ransacked Kabiru's house and made away with N600,000 after threatening to kill his son. They promised to come back for another N600,000 but he took their threat lightly. On Thursday March 29th around 1:00am the bandits armed with rifles forced their way into our house and abducted him," Idris said.

He said the family were later contacted and requested to pay N1,500,000 for the release of Idris.

Another incident occurred in Tandu village of Funtua LGaa about six weeks ago around 1:17am when armed bandits descended on the house of Alhaji Ahmadu and Alhaji Alhassan who are brothers.

Abdulhamid, the son of late Alhaji Alhassan said, "They first met Alhaji Ahmadu in his bedroom and shot him in the leg before dragging him to the room of our father, Alhaji

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Alhassan. They forced the door open and asked him out before they shot him in the chest and broke his legs and left hand."

The assailants, according to Abdulhamid, did not leave any hint on why they killed them but said they were asked to do so without giving any further details.

Another witness and younger brother of the deceased, Mallam Yahaya Tandu, said the late two brothers had no business other than farming and they had no rivalry with anybody.

"When the bandits came the wives of the deceased two brothers pleaded with them to spare the lives of their husbands, asking them to say the amount they wanted but their plea fell on deaf ears," Yahaya said.

He said farming was becoming a dangerous venture in the area in view of the marauders. Four weeks ago, one Mallam Sa'idu Nasarawa Funtua was abducted at Sheme, Faskari LGA on his way to Gusau. He spent nine days in captivity before his release.

He said, "I was on my way to see my second wife in Gusau when we suddenly ran into a road block of Fulani bandits, some of them dressed in military uniform, at Sheme. They asked us to lie down. They searched all the passengers, dispossessing me of N233,000. They later selected and blindfolded some of us for abduction."

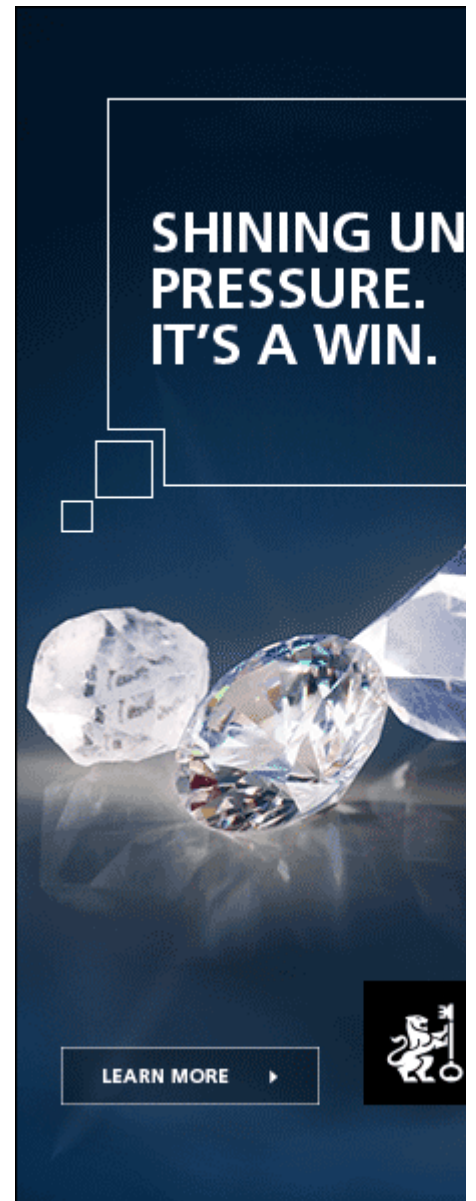
He said the bandits spent all the night travelling with them on bikes inside the forest, "and on reaching our destination in the morning, they asked me for N10,000,000 or they would kill me. I spent nine days in their den while they were negotiating with my family. On the ninth day, my family had to sell my only plot of land at N700,000 and to give them the money at Dogon Dawa.

They released me around 1:00am after receiving the money."

He said all the kidnappers were wielding Ak47 rifles and that before his release, they beat him severally and so severely that he could now not hear with his right ear.


A resident of Dandume town, Mallam Surajo Isah, said the developments called for government's urgent attention.

"We have to be alive and safe before we begin to think of cultivating our farms, and with the brazen activities of bandits in this dry season only God knows what will happen in the raining season when everywhere is covered with crops," Surajo Isah said, expressing the view that the bandits were apparently spilling from the neighbouring forests in Kaduna and Zamfara states.



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[Editor's note: This report was written before the deployment of additional troops to some of the affected areas to boost security.]

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