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23 unidentified bodies found in Zamfara forest

By Shehu Umar, Gusau | Publish Date: Jul 1 2018 6:01AM

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Corpses of 23 unidentified persons were found inside a forest in Zurmi Local Government area of Zamfara Atate, Daily Trust on Sunday gathered.

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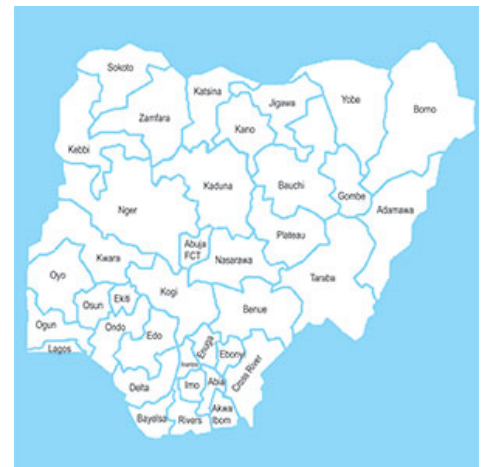
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The remains, some of which had gunshot wounds or slit throats, were discovered Friday evening in the bush.

The discovery caused panic in nearby communities, coming months after suspected armed bandits killed dozens in the area, located about 100 kilometres from the state capital Gusau.

In February, 41 people were killed when suspected armed bandits and cattle rustlers stormed a local market in Birane village in Zurmi Local Government firing at traders.

Daily Trust on Sunday learnt that none of the victims found on Friday could be identified by residents, suggesting that they were not from the area.

Locals said they could have fallen victims while on transit to another part of the state. They said the remains had since been buried.

Armed bandits have been wreaking havoc in communities across Zamfara State.

The Zamfara State police command said it had launched an investigation into the killings.

The spokesman of the state police command, SP Muhammad Shehu, said the police got information that bodies had been seen in a forest in Zurmi Local Government Area.

“Our team of operatives was there and it recovered the bodies. Discreet investigation has commenced in earnest and the perpetrators will soon be fished out,” he added.

But a resident in Boko village close to the scene, told our correspondent that the victims were killed by local vigilante, known as “Yan Sa kai.”

“The forest here has become a safe haven for criminals and when the local vigilantes saw the men, they engaged them in a fight and killed them,” the local who does not want to be named said. “We can’t actually ascertain their place of origin or where they were heading to.”



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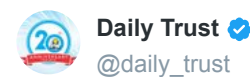
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“Recently, about 10 herds of cattle were stolen and the vigilantes are working to protect the communities from attacks by the rustlers and they won’t spare any criminal,” he added

Hundreds of lives and billion of naira worth of property have been lost over the years to armed bandits in the state. The attacks have forced people out of their homes to take shelter in other communities and neighbouring Katsina State.

Last week, the state governor, Abdulaziz Yari, said he was relinquishing his position of the chief security officer of the state because the post did not give him control over security agencies operating in the state.

The governor said despite being addressed as the chief security officer of the state, he could not order security personnel to check the activities of cattle rustlers in Zamfara.

“We have been facing serious security challenges over the years, but in spite of being governor and chief security officer of the state, I cannot direct security officers on what to do nor sanction them when they err,” he said.

He said the state had pumped billions of naira into aiding security agencies, with the aim of ending the carnage, but to no avail.

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