

Kidnappers kill, bury abducted Niger village head

From Romoke W. Ahmad, Minna

● Another, 2 nursing mothers, 15 others still held

One week after he was abducted, the Village Head of Madaka in Rafi Local Government Area of Niger State, Zakari Ya'u Idris, has been killed and buried reportedly by bandits terrorising some parts of the state.

The bandits, numbering about 50, last Sunday invaded Madaka where they killed three people and abducted the village head. Those killed were a leader of the vigilante group in the community, Isyaku Alhassan, his son Abdulhamid Isyaku and one other person.

The chief of staff to the chairman of the local government, Mohammed Mohammed, confirmed the killing of the monarch in a telephone conversation.

He said the bandits had earlier demanded a ransom of N800,000 from the family of the late village head. He said the village head's murder was announced by five people who were released by the bandits after payment of ransom.

"They said the village head was rough-handled before he was killed. They further disclosed that he was buried

in the bush by the bandits," he said.

A family member of the late village head told our correspondent that no ransom was paid to the kidnappers. "We were still struggling to raise the money when those freed broke the news to us that he had been killed," he said.

This is the second time the late village head was abducted by the bandits. About a month ago when he was abducted, he spent three months in the camp of his abductors.

The spokesman of the Niger State Police Command could not be reached for comment on the killing of the village head.

Meanwhile, the District Head of Gunna who was abducted in Yakila in the same local government is yet to regain freedom.

According to the local government chairman's aide, the gunmen were yet to contact the family of the district head or demand for ransom.

At least 50 people have been killed since armed bandits renewed attacks on

communities in the state.

In Rafi alone, over 10 people have been killed in the last one week, with 33 others abducted forcing thousands to flee their homes.

Also, bandits on Thursday killed a PDP ward leader in Kampala village, Bosso Local Government Area of the state, Ahmodu Mohammed and abducted three of his daughters.

Similarly, seven people were killed in Kusanu in Shiroro LGA on Friday night, while houses of those who escaped were set ablaze by the hoodlums.

Those killed in Kusanu were two women and four men. They were said to have fled into the bush but were tracked and killed by the bandits.

However, a source in one of the communities told our correspondent that a man said to be the driver of the bandits was arrested by officials of the NSCDC, in Shiroro Local Government Area of the state on Friday.

In his reaction over the killing of the party ward leader, a former PDP chairman in the state, Tanko Beji, described it

as unfortunate, saying people were no longer safe in their homes.

Reacting, Senator Sani Musa (APC, Niger East), said the recent onslaught by bandits was a Senatorial District, has raised tension and uncertainties in my mind and the minds of our people more than ever before.

Musa said: "A number of people have been killed and over 30 abducted since the latest attacks, and not less than 5,000 persons have become refugees from the over 15 communities in Niger East Senatorial District alone."

Two nursing mothers, 15 others kidnapped

About 17 people were kidnapped by gunmen on Saturday at Kuchi Community in Munya LGA of the state.

In a phone interview, a member of the community said the bandits overpowered the local vigilante before taking their victims away. The onslaught lasted for hours without security operatives' intervention, *Daily Trust* gathered.

Among those kidnapped were both parents of a former chairman of the local government, two nursing mothers and their about two weeks' old babies.

A businessman, popularly known as Alhaji Albakala, who had earlier relocated to Minna, the state capital, also had four of his family members abducted.

The member representing the constituency in the state house of assembly, Mr. Andrew Jagaba confirmed the incident.

Police arrest village head

The Police Command in Niger State has arrested the village head of Tungan-Iliya and 10 other persons over alleged banditry in Mashegu Local Government Area of the state.

Police spokesman in the state, ASP Wasiu Abiodun, said in a statement on Sunday in Minna that following intelligence report received on Dec. 25, a police team went on a clearance operation of suspected bandits' hideouts in Tunga-iliya forest.