

Bandits storm Zamfara community market, kill one, burn stalls

From Shehu Umar, Gusau

Suspected armed bandits, on Thursday, invaded a market in Yar' Tasha community in the troubled Dansadau district of Maru Local Government Area of Zamfara State, killing one person and injuring dozens of people, Daily Trust gathered.

Residents told our correspondent that two motorbike-riding gangs of armed men arrived from the western and eastern sides of the market firing at traders.

Yar Tasha community market holds every Thursday with livestock and grains as main commodities.

It is situated 25km north of Dansadau town or 75km south of Gusau, the state capital, and had witnessed series of deadly raids in the past.

A resident of the community, Alhaji Umaru Yar' Tasha, said the armed criminals laid siege on the market around 2pm and began to fire at the traders who mostly deal in livestock and grains.

"The whole market and the adjacent community were thrown into

pandemonium.

"Traders were running to different directions for safety. Many of the scampering traders were badly injured.

"I was at the frontage of my house when I began to hear gunshots, and within seconds, everyone was running for his or her dear life. I dashed into my house and locked the door.

"As I'm talking to you, I'm right inside my house and I can see a plume of smoke billowing from the burnt market stalls from here.

"Most of the traders, who had earlier abandoned their goods, might not return and some that are brave enough came back to count their losses.

"The assailants might have withdrawn. Just now, someone called and told me that only one corpse was seen.

"But the armed criminals made away with several abandoned goods, especially livestock and clothing material.

"It is really a very terrible moment for us here," the resident said.

However, he said the swift intervention of the policemen

attached to a nearby community saved the situation that could have been calamitous.

He said the armed men withdrew after the policemen arrived on an armoured personnel carrier.

Some residents told our correspondent that the armed men decided to attack the market after claiming some of their cattle were stolen.

"They had earlier come to the livestock section of the market and pointed at some tethered cows and insisted that the cattle be released to them because they were stolen from them.

"The cattle dealers at the market began to look for ways to negotiate the release of the cows knowing the consequences of not doing so.

"However, some of the armed bandits put a phone call to their brothers in the forest and within minutes they arrived and began to fire shots at people," a cattle dealer Aliyu Dansani said.

The spokesman of the state police command, SP Muhammad Shehu, said he would get back to our correspondent but did not do so up to the time of filing this report.