

# 51 killed in fresh attacks in Zamfara

## ● Gov suspends Zurmi emir

Shehu Umar, Gusau

**S**uspected armed bandits have killed at least 51 people in attacks on five communities in Zurmi Local Government Area of Zamfara State between Thursday and Friday, *Daily Trust Saturday* gathered.

The communities are Kadawa, Kwata, Maduba, Ganda Samu, Saulawa and Askawa. Hundreds of residents have been displaced by the attacks, with many of the residents, mostly women and children taking shelter in Dauran or Zurmi towns.

Residents said several motorbike riding gangs of armed men stormed the communities, firing at people. The armed criminals were chasing the residents into their houses and farms and shooting killing them.

In recent weeks, Zurmi Local Government Area has witnessed a sharp spike in deadly raids on rural communities. Last week, aggrieved youths blocked the Gusau-Kaura

Namoda-Zurmi road to protest the unending killings by the armed criminals.

Even before then, there was a protest at the palace of the Emir of Zurmi, Alhaji Abubakar Atiku by dwellers of rural communities in the local government, over what they described as a massacre being perpetrated by the armed men.

The bodies of the slain residents already recovered were brought to Dauran, a community located about 10 km west of Zurmi town, the headquarters of Zurmi Local Government Area.

"Several other bodies are yet to be recovered from the surrounding bushes, although effort is being intensified to recover them so that they would be properly buried.

"So far, we have buried 28 victims in the community. As I am talking to you, we have just finished the funeral rites. Mass burial was conducted for the victims," a resident identified as Haruna told our correspondent.

The spokesman of the state police command, SP Muhammad Shehu, said the police had brought 14 bodies for burial at the Unguwar Gwaza cemetery in Gusau, the state capital.

He said the state commissioner of police, Mr Hussaini Rabi'u, was at Dauran community and security operatives there were reinforced.

Meanwhile, Governor Bello Mohammed Matawalle of Zamfara has approved the suspension of Emir of Zurmi, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar Muhammad, over his alleged links with insecurity in the state.

A statement by the acting Secretary to Zamfara State Government (SSG), Kabiru Balarabe, said Alhaji Bello Suleiman (Bunun Kanwa) has been directed to take charge of affairs of the emirate immediately.

He said the governor had approved the constitution of a high powered committee led by a former deputy governor, Ibrahim Wakkala Muhammed, to investigate allegations made against the suspended emir on his alleged involvement in the escalating rate of banditry attacks in the emirate.