

Bandits abduct Zamfara emir in Kaduna-Abuja Highway attack

● 11 murdered in Kaduna

● Soldier shot dead as bandits abduct woman, children in Zaria

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Gunmen on Tuesday afternoon blocked the Kaduna-Abuja Highway and abducted the first-class emir of Bungudu, in Zamfara State, Alhaji Hassan Attahiru.

Daily Trust gathered that a police officer said to be attached to the emir was shot dead during an exchange of fire while some of the emir's guards sustained injuries.

Eyewitness said the incident occurred between 2:30pm and 3pm near Dutse village which is a few kilometers from Olam farms along the Abuja-Kaduna lane of the highway.

The eyewitness said many vehicles were forced to turn back during the operation while others drove against traffic until they reached a village where lots of trailers and other vehicles waited for security intervention.

Our correspondent could not verify if other travellers were abducted during the operation but the eyewitnesses said security agents comprising of the military and Police had later cleared the road to allow for vehicular movements.

Another traveller said the incident happened in a forest area where there were lots of mango plantations, adding that several vehicles had parked by the road-side and could see the gunmen operating from a distance. He however confirmed that security agents had later intervened but could not say if anyone had been abducted.

All efforts to reach the Kaduna State Police Command failed as the Police Public Relations Officer, ASP Mohammed Jalige, did not respond to calls and a text message sent to his phone.

Daily Trust reports that the Kaduna-Abuja highway which gained notoriety for mass

abductions by gunmen has in recent months become peaceful after the Nigerian Army deployed about 300 female soldiers to patrol the highway.

Meanwhile, a Catholic Priest who was kidnapped on Monday night in Ikulu Chieftdom of Zangon Kataf Local Government Area of Kaduna State has been freed.

Rev. Fr Luka Benson was released Tuesday evening, "and he returned home safely," said Samule Sidi Kukah, an elder from the community, who confirmed the development to Daily Trust.

Also, gunmen invaded Apiye Jim village in Atyp chieftdom, still in Zango-Kataf Local Government Area of Kaduna, killing 11 persons.

The attack, according to a source, happened on Sunday evening.

Although there is no official confirmation from either the state government or the state Police command, the spokesman of the Southern Kaduna Peoples Union (SOKAPU), Mr. Luka Binniyat, confirmed the attack to our correspondent.

Binniyat said, "It is very true. They also killed another man in Atakshusho village about three kilometers from the initial scene of crime as they were retreating to make an escape.

"Recall that an ECWA Reverend was murdered just on the outskirts of Zangon Kataf town, which our people have always complained of harbouring killers, time and again.

"As usual, no one has been apprehended. We are awaiting details of the killings, after which we shall issue a statement."

A source said many of the villagers were still missing after Monday attack, but noted that, so far, no fewer than 11 lifeless bodies had been recovered.

According to him, the attackers came in large

numbers and perpetrated the act in a jiffy.

He added, "They (attackers) came while it was raining and divided themselves into groups. They targeted specific houses and when done, left immediately.

"Scores of the villagers are missing at the moment. It's impossible for one to ascertain the number of those injured and even those killed; but so far, I have counted and found 11 dead persons in different locations."

In another incident, bandits have killed a soldier and abducted a housewife and her two children at Milgoma opposite Ahmadu Bello University Teaching Hospital, Shika Zaria, Kaduna State.

Daily Trust gathered that the soldier died at an undisclosed hospital following the injuries sustained in a gun duel with the attackers.

The incident happened around 9pm on Monday, according to residents.

According to a reliable source in the community, the bandits, numbering about 30, armed with sophisticated weapons shot sporadically as they attacked the community.

He said the joint personnel of Kaduna State Vigilance Service, Military and Police swiftly responded to the distress call, adding that on sighting the security agencies, the bandits engaged them in shootout that led to the soldier's death.

There was no report of casualties on the side of the bandits as at the time of filing this report.

Malam Haruna Shika, a resident, said six kidnapped children were rescued at Kasuwan Da'a in Zaria by the security operatives.

However, Lt. Joy Abah, Acting Assistant Director, Army Public Relations Officer Depot Nigeria Army Zaria, said the information on the death of the soldier has not been communicated to her.

Nasarawa gov summons emergency meeting over bandits' infiltration