

Bandits Attack Zurmi Emir's Palace, Kill 3

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cover daily

By Yusha'u A. Ibrahim, Gusau



Bandits have attacked the palace of the Emir of Zurmi, Alhaji Bello Muhammad Bunu, killing three people and abducting some residents of the town.

The bandits, who stormed the town around 10pm on Wednesday, according to locals, also attacked the residence of the former Military Administrator of Nasarawa State, Colonel Bala Muhammad Mande (rtd).

While Col. Mande, a former minister of environment under Chief Olusegun Obasanjo's administration was not in the house, Emir Bunu was in the palace when the bandits launched the attack, Daily Trust learnt.

During the attack, the bandits also destroyed a GSM mast and burnt two generating sets located adjacent the emir's palace.

A resident of the town who pleaded anonymity, told our reporter that upon their arrival in the town, the bandits went straight to the emir's place and opened fire at the entrance gate in their efforts to gain access.

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He said: "Gladly, the gate was locked, otherwise they would have gained access into the palace and probably reached the emir's apartment. He was the main target because they attempted to kidnap him not long ago.

"In fact, he just returned to the town on Monday after the first attempt to kidnap him failed. The emir was silently moved to the state capital, Gusau, where he spent a week there," the source said.

Another resident, who also did not want to be named, said when the bandits failed to gain access to the palace, they moved to the residence of the former military administrator and fired several shots at the gate, thereby damaging it.

“On their way out of the town, they killed three people and abducted some others. We don’t know the number of people abducted because when the bandits started the shooting, residents ran into the bush for safety.

“No one dared stay back when the bandits were firing shots. The magnitude of the gunshots was scary, hence, we all ran into the bush for our dear lives.

“We are calling on the government to provide enough soldiers to the town because the bandits may return again since they know the emir is in town. All they want is to abduct the emir and we don’t know why they want to kidnap him,” the resident said.

Another resident, Muhammad Inuwa said he was planning to relocate his family to Gusau as he could not endure the trauma the residents were going through due to attacks by armed bandits.

He said: “I am tired... We are struggling to cope with the economic situation and at the same time battling with banditry. The burden is too much for us to shoulder. I cannot bear it anymore.

“I am contemplating relocating my family to Gusau. At least, if they are in the state capital I can have peace of mind and concentrate on my menial job,” he said.

A father of six, Inuwa, also called on governments to come to their aid by providing them with adequate security personnel that would protect their lives and properties.

Police confirm attack

The Commissioner of Police in Zamfara, Muhammad Shehu Dalijan, confirmed the attack but said he was not aware that some people were killed.

CP Dalijan, however, admitted that one of the staff of Zurmi emir’s palace was abducted by the bandits.

“He was not abducted in the palace as being speculated. Rather, he was abducted somewhere within the town.

“I can only confirm the abduction of one person and the burning of GSM service mast,” he said.

Daily Trust reliably gathered that three people: Sarkin Gida of Zurmi Emirate, Alhaji Yusuf Buhari; a local tea seller whose shop is close to the palace and one other person were those abducted by the bandits during the attack.

A relation, who preferred not to be named, said, “Sarkin Gida was not so lucky. He was coming out from the palace when the bandits started firing at the gate. So, when he started running, the bandits shouted at him and asked him to stop.

“They warned him that even if he entered his house, they would follow him inside and abduct him. So, he stopped and they kidnapped him along with the tea seller and one other person,” he said.

It was further learnt that although the bandits did not gain access into the palace, they looted all the properties in the emir’s family house also located adjacent the palace.

Another palace source, who pleaded anonymity, said the attack had shaken the entire members of the royal family, as according to him, “Our concern is the safety of the emir. It appears this time around the bandits wanted to embarrass the entire traditional institution. We will continue praying against them.

“Although we have not received additional security operatives, the personnel of the state-owned Community Protection Guard (CPG) and members of the vigilante group have been mobilised to the palace to protect the emir.”

Daily Trust recalls that Wednesday’s attack on the palace was the second of its kind in Zamfara State, as the palace of Emir of Maru, Alhaji Abubakar Gado Maigari, was also attacked by bandits last year.

During the attack, a policeman and a physically challenged person were killed by the bandits.