

## NEWS.

# One killed as cattle rustlers rape women, sack Zamfara communities

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AT least one woman died after a band of rampaging cattle rustlers attacked 10 villages in Gusau local council of Zamfara State at the weekend, raped no fewer than 50 women and displaced over 1,500 women and children.

The Guardian learnt that a majority of the women and children have fled to some nearby communities and were yet to locate other family members. According to our source, the cattle rustlers have been hiding in Aja forest -between Zamfara and Katsina states - and have frequently terrorized neighbouring communities.

The multiple attacks and rape of both married and unmarried women, it was learnt, lasted Monday and Tuesday, after which residents fled the affected communities, which included Fegin Mahe, Fegin Kanawa, Kundumai, Ingwai, Tsaunuku, Gangara, Wonaka, Kuka Gandu, Kuliwa and Lahiya.

A survivor at the Gusau refugees' camp, Mrs. Aisha Ibrahim, from Fegin Kanawa, said she ran to Gusau for safety, alongside others, as the hoodlums ransacked their villages.

"What we saw in our village was unimaginable," Aisha recalled. "Many women were randomly raped by these cattle rustlers carrying dangerous weapons. A middle-aged woman in our village was raped by eight men and she later died, while over 50 women were raped in the attacks."

A senior government official at Damba Model Primary School in Gusau - one of the four refugee camps established by government – said there were about 2,000 displaced women and children at the centres set up after the mayhem.

According to the official, Damba camp has 478 persons, comprising 263 children and 215 women, while Koshi camp has 459 persons, comprising 209 women and 250 children. At Mada camp, there are 600 persons, comprising 300 women and 300 children, while at Yandoto camp, there are 380 persons, comprising 230 children and 150 women.

Meanwhile, the Commissioner for Information, Ibrahim Birnin Magaji, disclosed that a committee has been set up, headed by the speaker of the House of Assembly, to ascertain the situation, support the affected households and advise government on how to return the refugees to their respective communities.

Zamfara State Police Public Relations Officer, DSP Lawal Abdullahi, confirmed the incident but the security operatives were on top of it.

