

Bandits kill four, injure three in Katsina, Imo

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Armed bandits have killed two people at Kofar Kudu village in Kaita Council of Katsina State in the early hours of yesterday. They also injured a police officer and two others during exchange of gunfire.

Shooting sporadically to scare residents, the gunmen reportedly attacked the home of a 50-year-old merchant, Alhaji Sa'adu Dan Bagalo, and abducted him in the process.

They also abducted one Bawale Inusa, 58, in the same village and were about escaping with them into the forest when a police patrol team accosted them. A gunfire exchange was said to have ensued and the bandits, not wanting the two men to escape, shot and killed them.

Spokesman for the police command, SP Gambo Isah, confirmed the incident in a statement. Similarly, people of Ifakala Autonomous Community in Mbaitoli Council of Imo State were thrown into mourning as two indigenes have been gunned down.

According to the report made available to The Guardian, the gunmen invaded the community yesterday and killed the victims, a man and a woman, inside their homes in two separate operations. While Chinedu Chibuka, 32, was killed late Saturday night in Umuchinenwe Umuagwuochi in Ifakala; Mrs. Nnedimma Nwaiwu, 29, was shot dead yesterday morning in Owerre-Ifakala village.

Before his death, Chibuka was a security personnel attached to a poultry farm in the area, while Mrs. Nwaiwu was a mother of four. It was gathered that she was killed in the presence of her little children, who it was gathered, had pleaded for the bandits to spare their mother's life. But their entreaties were to no avail.

A villager, who pleaded anonymity, said the killers jumped over the fence and forced their way into the deceased's residence. He told newsmen that the people of Ifakala were taken unawares by the attackers, adding that the killings could be related to a reprisal.

Another villager, who simply identified himself as Okenwa, said: "We cannot particularly state the real cause of the attack, but we suspect that it could be connected to the arrest of one criminal gang leader, Izuchukwu, by the police."

It was gathered that Izuchukwu's gang had attacked the community two years ago, but was apprehended by the villagers, who quickly set three of the gangsters ablaze, with Izuchukwu escaping unhurt. "This year, the gang returned and became a thorn in the flesh of the people of our village. The community rallied to inform the police about the return of Izuchukwu and his new gang. So, last two weeks, he was picked up by the police and since then, we started witnessing this attack that led to the killing of the young man and woman," Okenwa said.



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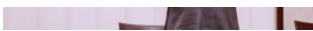
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As of the time of filing this report, the spokesperson for the police in Imo State, Orlando Ikeoku, was yet to respond to messages sent to him for comments on the incident.

