

Bandits Attack Niger Communities, Kill Catholic Priest, Abduct 17 Others

| By Chinwendu Nnadozie On Jan 18, 2021 4:32 AM

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Rev. Fr. John Gbakaani Yaji

MINNA – A Catholic priest of the Diocese of Minna, Rev. Fr. John Gbakaani Yaji, has been kidnapped and killed by suspected armed bandits in Niger State, even as the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) has called on the government to live up to its responsibilities of protecting the lives and property of citizens.

The incident was said to have occurred on Friday night in Tufa village, along the Lambata-Lapai road, when the assailants accosted him and his younger brother on their way back to Minna, after an engagement.

Late Rev. Fr. John was said to be on his way back to Minna from Lambata where he had attended a religious meeting, along with his team of priestly orderlies, but was kidnapped and his body later found dead.

The late Catholic priest was kidnapped alongside his younger brother, but our correspondent reliably gathered, as at the time of filing this report, that the whereabouts of the junior brother was yet unknown.

Spokesman of the Niger State Police Command, ASP Wasiu Abiodun, could not confirm the report as efforts to reach him proved abortive.

The Bishop of Catholic Diocese (Minna), Igwe Uzoukwu, could also not be reached for comments as he was said to have travelled out of town for an engagement.

But a Catholic priest from the diocese confirmed the murder of Fr. John on condition of anonymity.

Meanwhile, the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Niger State chapter, has described the abduction and killing of Rev. Fr. John Gbakaani Yaji as not only unfortunate but also very painful.

State CAN chairman, Revd. Mathias Echioda, in his reaction lamented: “The attacks are unfortunate and we should not base them as religious but let us all come together to put an end to armed banditry.

“I know that if we come together sincerely and pray fervently, God who answers prayers will definitely hear and deliver us from the hands of the wicked.”

The CAN chairman appealed to the government not to abandon the citizens to the mercy of blood-thirsty criminals who derive joy in shedding the blood of the innocent, harmless citizens