

Yobe, Katsina

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The Joint Task Force (JTF) and police are now combing the bush and security agents across the state are on red alert,' he said.

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He stressed that the police were rebuilding confidence among the communities to volunteer information to security operatives.

The commissioner said that "bandits now parade themselves as Boko Haram to induce fear in people."

Youths kill pastor, burn church over alleged ritual murder

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Irate youths in Kankia town, the headquarters of Kankia local government area of Katsina State, yesterday, killed a pastor of an ECWA church, Pastor Dike Ocha, aged 50, over the alleged murder of a six-year-old Fatima Yusuf.

The youths also set both the church and the pastor's house ablaze.

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It was gathered that Fatima had been declared missing for four days but her body was found mutilated and the private parts removed at an area close to the residence of the pastor.

The youths were said to have concluded that the body was dumped by the pastor and hence attacked him. He was reportedly rescued and rushed to the hospital but his attackers followed him to the hospital where they killed him and set his corpse ablaze.

Confirming the incident to

newsmen, the Katsina State commissioner of police, Muhammad Hurdi, said the attackers presumed the pastor to be the killer of the girl and so took the law into their hands by setting him ablaze.

Hurdi said the Eze Igbo of Kankia who was at the residence of the pastor at the time of the attack escaped narrowly as he was also attacked by the rampaging youths. The Eze's properties were set ablaze by the youths, he added.

"It is unthinkable to assume that the pastor having killed the girl for whatever purpose would go ahead to dump her body near his house. Somebody who did that would not be stupid to bring the corpse near his house.

"This is the work of some mischief makers who want to ascribe some notion that the action was done by the pastor and we will investigate the matter to bring the perpetrators to book," Hurdi said.

He said it could be the work of some mischievous characters that committed the act and tried to frame the pastor for an offence he never committed or "it could be the work of some rapists who probably raped the girl".

The police boss, however, noted that the whole incident has no religious or ethnic undertone, even as he urged residents of the area to go on with their normal business, assuring that the police would get to the root of the matter.

Our correspondent reports that normalcy has returned to the area.

ciently defeating terrorism and restoring normalcy in all parts of the country to avert extension after April. The CDS' statement should not be mistaken for a false sense of hope or mere grandstanding as have been imputed by some individuals. Ending terrorism anywhere has never been and cannot be precisely determined by a directive.

"The remarks by the CDS was meant to motivate commanders and troops to work harder towards restoration of normalcy as envisaged in the states under emergency rule. Unfortunately, the charge has been taken too literally to mean definite promise to end terrorism by April."

He continued: "Much as the security agencies are working hard to ensure the safety of citizens, the nature of terrorism in Nigeria, especially the trans-border dimension, makes it difficult to make definite commitment or promise. Efforts are however being made to secure better cooperation from neighbouring countries serving as safe havens for terrorists from where they unleash mayhem in Nigerian communities. However, there is still need for communities to deploy capacity to clean up their territories of terrorists and appropriate actions have started in this direction.

"The CDS was not unmindful of the hydra-headed nature of the situation when he made those comments. He was simply being optimistic that, given the vigour, zeal and combat-readiness of the new service chiefs, the Nigerian military must work hard to bring the situa-