

Gunmen kill Catholic priest, abduct another in Katsina church attack

• Bandits kill 4, injure 3, rustle cattle in Kaduna

A CATHOLIC priest, Reverend Father Alphonsus Bello, was killed by gunmen who invaded St. Vincent Ferrer Catholic Church, Malumfashi on Thursday night.

Another priest, Reverend Father Joe Keke, was abducted.

His whereabouts were unknown last night.

In neighbouring Kaduna State, some other gangs killed four persons, injured three and rustled 30 cows.

The Katsina bandits invaded the church premises at about 11 pm on Thursday and proceeded to the residences of the two priests located in the compound.

The two priests were rounded up and taken away.

But while Bello's body was later found in the town early yesterday, the fate of Keke was not immediately known.

The incident was confirmed by the Chancellor, Sokoto Diocese, Rev. Fr.

From AbdulGafar Alabelewe, Kaduna

Cornelius Tagwai.

Tagwai in a statement said: "It is with a heavy heart I officially announce the call to eternal rest of Rev. Fr. Alphonsus Yashim Bello, who until his death was a Fidei Donum Priest from Kaduna Archdiocese and the Parish Priest of St Vincent Ferrer's Parish, Malumfashi, Katsina State.

"This sad event took place at the early hours of today, Friday, May 21, 2021.

"The late Fr Bello was kidnapped along with Very Rev Fr. Joseph Keke, the most Senior Priest of Sokoto Diocese, but his lifeless body was later found abandoned behind the CTC, Malumfashi. "The whereabouts of Fr Keke is not yet known.

"May the soul of Fr Bello and the souls of the faithful

departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

"Kindly join us in prayer for the immediate and safe return of Fr. Keke and for the peaceful repose of Fr Bello."

The spokesman for the Katsina police command, SP Gambo Isah, also confirmed the incident, saying: "The incident is true and we are doing all we could to ensure that Reverend father Keke is rescued alive.

"As for the other priest, Reverend father Bello, our men found the corpse and there was no sign of gunshots on him. He could have died of Axyphesation or shock.

"We have arrested two suspects in connection with the incident because the gunmen, after entering the large compound, went straight to the residences of the two priests.

"The Commissioner of Police has directed the Area

Commander, Malumfashi to mobilise all resources in the area to ensure that Reverend father Keke is rescued alive."

Gunmen have been terrorizing Katsina State for some time, killing and abducting people at will.

Bandits kill 4, injure 3, rustle cattle in Kaduna

In neighbouring Kaduna State, bandits killed four persons, injured three and rustled 30 cows, according to Internal Security and Home Affairs Commissioner Samuel Aruwan.

The commissioner said one gang invaded Zangon Aya town in Igabi Local Government Area and killed two persons identified as Falalu Dari and Sabiu Idris.

He said some other bandits attacked Rugar Delu, a settlement on the fringes of the town, and rustled about 30 cows belonging to one Delu Bafilata, a herder. Delu sustained gunshot injuries in

the chest and was receiving treatment in hospital.

In another reported incident, the commissioner said bandits invaded Ungwan Murtala in Yakawada, Giwa Local Government Area and shot one Inusa Ibrahim dead.

He said: "Three other residents sustained injuries and are receiving treatment. They are: Mustapha Ya'u, Bilyaminu Saidu and Bilyaminu Abubakar."

The commissioner stated that in another development, armed bandits stormed Godogodo village of Jema'a Local Government Area and attempted to attack a police outpost but were repelled by the personnel. However one Ayuba Madugu was killed by the gunmen.

He said: "The incident threatened to bring about an escalation of ethno-religious tensions in the area. Security operatives moved swiftly to douse the tension, and brought the situation under

control. Calm has returned to the area.

"Governor Nasir El-Rufai received the reports and commiserated with the families of the deceased while praying for the repose of their souls. He wished those injured in the attack a speedy recovery.

"The Governor further commended security agencies and community leaders for de-escalating the tension that arose in Godogodo town, which resulted in erecting of barricades on the Gidanwaya-Godogodo-Jagindi road, causing motorists to retreat in panic.

"The Governor appealed to the residents of Godogodo to work together and not perceive criminality from an ethno-religious standpoint. He urged them instead to cooperate with security agencies and other stakeholders to tackle criminals," Aruwan said.