

Catholic priest burnt to death in Niger



Justina Asishana, Minna



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•CAN calls for investigation •Police begin manhunt for suspects
The Parish Priest of St. Peters and Paul Catholic Church in Kafin-Koro, Paikoro Local Government Area of Niger State, Rev. Fr. Isaac Achi, was yesterday burnt to death by terrorists.

The late priest was the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) coordinator in Paikoro council.

The culprits also burnt the parish house and shot his colleague, identified as Fr. Collins, in the shoulder while trying to escape.

The arsonists allegedly burnt the parish house when they could not gain entrance into it.

Police spokesperson Abiodun Wasiu said the terrorists escaped before the police tactical team got to the scene. He said Fr. Achi's body was recovered while Fr. Collins was rushed to the hospital for treatment.

The Christian Association of Nigeria has condemned the murder and called for investigations.

Chairman of CAN Rev. Bulus Yohanna stressed that the culprits must be brought to book, and urged the government, police, and other security agencies to double their efforts in tackling banditry and insecurity.

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"Enough of the attacks and wanton killings of innocent Nigerians. One of the primary responsibilities of government is to protect the lives and property of the people you govern," he added.

Yohanna condoled with the Catholic Diocese of Minna, parishioners, and the entire Christendom as well as the immediate family of the slain priest. He prayed for the repose of Fr. Achi's soul.

The police said they have deployed reinforcements to track down the suspected killers.

A statement by Abiodun said: "On January 15, about 0300hrs, armed bandits invaded the Parish residence of one Rev. Father Isaac Achi of Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church on Daza road, Kafin-Koro, Paikoro Local Government Area.

"The bandits reportedly attempted to enter the resident, but it was difficult, and so they set the house ablaze, while the said Rev. Father burnt to death.

"Rev. Achi's colleague, identified as Fr. Collins, was shot on the shoulder while trying to escape from the scene.

"The Commissioner of Police, Ogundele Ayodeji, had dispatched a reinforcement team to the area and effort is on to apprehend the assailants as investigation has begun."