

Bandits burn Catholic seminarian to death in Kaduna



AbdulGafar Alabelewe, Kaduna September 9, 2023



- *Attack aimed at causing religious crisis, says gov*

Kaduna State governor Uba Sani, vowed yesterday that the bandits who attacked the Fadan Kamattan Parish of the Kafanchan Catholic Diocese late Thursday would not go unpunished.

A young seminarian, Naam Ngofe Danladi was confirmed killed during the attack during which the parish priest's house was also set ablaze.

Sani expressed outrage at the killings which he said was aimed at igniting ethnic and religious tensions in the state and sabotaging government's efforts towards rebuilding trust in the various communities.

He vowed to track down the killers.

Kaduna State Chapter Chairman of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), the Rev. John Joseph Hayab, said the Parish Priest, Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Okolo, who was the target of the bandits, escaped by the whiskers.

Hayab said: “the armed men invaded a Catholic Church Parish Headquarters located at Fadan Kamantan community and the criminals targeted the parish priest’s residence. The Parish Priest, Very Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Okolo, who also doubles as the Chancellor of the Catholic Diocese of Kafanchan, and his assistant were able to escape out of the house before the criminals set the entire Rectory ablaze, burning to death a seminarian, Bro. Naam Ngofe Danladi, who was just about completing his training into the Catholic priesthood.

“What is disheartening about this particular attack is the fact that the place of attack is just by the Kaduna – Kafanchan Major highway with a military checkpoint not far from the parish. The parish is located at the heart of Kamantan town and the attack was carried out at about 8:00 pm. This causes us to wonder some more: where is the hope, how much more terrible could the situation get?

“We appreciate the willingness of the present administration to proffer practical, real and lasting solutions to the security challenge in Kaduna State as made visible by the ongoing recruitment process of over 7,000 men and women into the Kaduna State Vigilante Services (KADVIS).

“In the light of sharing in the faith of the perceived goodwill of the present administration in Kaduna State, we invite the governor of Kaduna State and all relevant stakeholders to immediately swing into action and ensure that those responsible for the Kamatan Evil Night are apprehended and made to face the law.

“Security is everyone’s business, it is disappointing that this kind of unholy activity could be recorded at the heart of the Fadan Kamantan community and the criminals will operate unchallenged. It is a slap to the security forces within that jurisdiction, it is a slap to the religious leaders, traditional and community leaders.

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“The position of CAN Kaduna State Chapter has always been that we as citizens must complement government in her primary responsibility of saving our lives and properties by proactively building a community security system that prevents any form of invading force into our community, sadly we are still here. We reiterate again here, that leaders at all levels in Southern Kaduna and Kaduna State must wake up to this call and be responsible for the protection of the communities where they live and lead.

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“We cannot continue like this, no it is unacceptable and we all must wake up to our responsibilities.

“The Executive of the Christian Association of Nigeria CAN Kaduna State Chapter and indeed all Christians in Kaduna State sincerely sympathize with the chief shepherd and local ordinary of Kafanchan Diocese, Most Rev. Dr. Julius Kundi, the parish priest and parishioners of Kamatan Parish, the Kurama Community of Bro. Naam Ngofe Danladi, the leaders and the good people of Zangon Kataf LGA and Fadan Kamantan community over this unfortunate incident, we pray that the good Lord will heal our land and bring this menace to an end.”

Sani : No hiding place for the bandits

Governor Sani in a statement through his Chief Press Secretary, Muhammad Lawal Shehu, condemned the attack in “the strongest possible terms.”

Shehu said: “Expressing outrage at the killings, the governor vowed to track down the perpetrators of the heinous crime and ensure that they face the full wrath of the law. The attack, he said, was carried out with the sole intention of igniting ethnic and religious tensions in Kaduna State and sabotaging government’s efforts towards rebuilding trust in our communities.

“This act of violence against innocent worshipers is not only an attack on the Catholic community, but an attempt to set our people against each other. We will not tolerate such acts of brutality and will go to any length within the law to bring the attackers to book.

“While urging the security agencies to swiftly investigate the incident and ensure that the culprits are arrested and made to face the full wrath of the law, Governor Sani expressed his heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims and assured them of the state government’s support during this difficult time.

“Governor Uba Sani’s administration has taken proactive steps to restore peace in troubled communities by strengthening partnerships with Federal Security Agencies and reinvigorating the Kaduna Vigilance Service (KADVS). The State Government recently recruited and commenced the training of 7,000 personnel of the Kaduna Vigilance Service (KADVS).

“Additionally, strategic engagements have taken place with top Federal Government officials responsible for security such as the Minister of Police Affairs, Senator Ibrahim Geidam, and the Minister of State Police Affairs Hon. Imaan Sulaiman-Ibrahim and the recently appointed Service Chiefs.”