

## News

## Suspected Fulani bandits kill village head, kidnap 17 others in Niger

Adelowo Oladipo | Minna

**G**UNMEN suspected to be Fulani armed bandits in a commando-like manner invaded Rumache community in Kuko-ki Ward of Shiroro Local Government Area of Niger State, on Friday killing the Village Head, Malam Ahmad Yakubu Rumache and kidnapped the deceased's son.

The bandits, according to the chairman of Shiroro Local Government Area of the state, Hon. Suleman Chukuba in an interview with newsmen, invaded the community around 12:00 am, and kidnapped no fewer than 17 villagers, including the son of the slain village head, Malam Rumache.

The Council Chairman who confirmed the attack to our reporter, in Minna, in a telephone interview said, the incident came days after similar attacks were carried out by some heavily armed bandits on four communities of Magami, Gungu, Zongoro and Masuku, all in Shiroro local government area where six people were said to have been

kidnapped while one of the victims was said to have been released later.

Speaking further, the Council Chairman said the villagers were caught unawares, saying "it was difficult to ascertain the number of bandits who invaded the village since the attack occurred in the night"

"The attack happened between 12:00 midnight and 2:00am. They were many and they took the villagers unawares. No one could ascertain their number because it was in the dead of the night."

"As for casualties, only the village head of Rumache was killed while his son was kidnapped. However, a day before this attack, the bandits invaded four communities and kidnapped 17 people in Magami, Gungu, Zongoro and Masuku communities," he maintained.

He further disclosed that a team of police operatives attached to Erena Division, under the Niger State Police Command and some vigilantes were currently searching the bushes and the villages for the victims.

The Chairman appealed for

urgent government's intervention to bring the incessant attacks in the area under control, stressing that Shiroro local government area needed nothing other than prayers and government's urgent intervention.

"I need government intervention because of the way this thing is going, we need government intervention," he declared.

He stated further that this latest attack came barely one week after the kidnap of the son of the District Head of Beni and 32 others in an early morning invasion of Beni community in Munya local government area of the state where the armed men-cum kidnappers, allegedly demanded for about N49 million ransom for the release of their kidnap victims.

The council boss further narrated that three weeks ago, a similar group of bandits invaded another set of Niger communities in Munya local government area of the state, leading to the killing of a Nigerian Army Captain and three soldiers in an ambush while they were deployed to

the area to maintain law and order.

He, however, explained that the Friday morning attack by the bandits saw the villagers being dispossessed of their personal effects, including unspecified sums of money running into several millions of naira after which, hoodlums set their residential houses and commercial outlets on fire before abducting their victims.

Meanwhile, one of the children of the deceased Village Head, Al-Mustapha Ahmed also confirmed the murder of his father, just as he expressed shock over the attack that left his father dead and one of his brothers abducted.

He, however, expressed regrets that the state government has deliberately remained complacent on the lingering security challenges currently rocking the whole Shiroro local government and its neighbouring communities.

According to Ahmed, "attacks of this nature have almost become a daily routine, thereby constantly subjecting unarmed and peace-loving people to ceaseless tension,

fear, anxiety, and panic.

"It is no longer news that inhabitants of these affected parts of the local government have since been robbed of security, forcing us to scamper helter-skelter for security and safety somewhere else. People have been displaced and made circumstantial but avoidable refugees in their own ancestral land," he concluded.

But in a brief interview with our reporter on Friday in Minna, the Police Public Relations Officer, Niger State Police Command Mr. Muhammad Abubakar a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) said the Command was yet to get the details of the ugly incident at Shiroro Local Government Area of the State and as such could not comment officially on the matter.

He added that the police would try to investigate the matter, adding that as soon as the investigation was concluded he would get in touch with Saturday Tribune, with the view to confirm the report and as well ascertained the exact numbers of the victims.

## Trafficked Omolola Ajayi arrives Abuja from Lebanon

OMOLOLA Ajayi, the 23-year-old Nigerian woman recently suspected to have been trafficked to Lebanon has arrived in Abuja and handed over to National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) on Friday.

Ajayi had cried out for help in a video which went viral, claiming that she was sold into slavery in Lebanon.

The video was seen on many social media platforms where she was pleading for help, a situation that triggered Federal Government into action for her rescue.

The Director of NAPTIP's Public Enlightenment, Mr Orakwe Arinze, who received the victim, said that her rehabilitation would commence immediately.

Arinze said "now that the victim had been received, profiling of her details would commence, followed by rehabilitation."

He urged Nigerians planning any illegal journey to be weary of the kind of promises they received from people abroad.