

# Police confirm killing of nine in Niger village mosque

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THE police in Niger State have confirmed the killing of nine persons in a mosque in Ba'are village in Mashegu Local Government Area of the state.

The Commissioner of Police in the state, Monday Bala Kuryas, confirmed the incident in a telephone interview with the *Nigerian Tribune* on Thursday in Minna, the state capital.

Kuryas said: "Nine persons were killed by suspected bandits, while several oth-

ers narrowly escaped being killed, but sustained varying degrees of injuries."

He said efforts were already ongoing to arrest the culprits.

Earlier, it was speculated that 16 worshippers were killed inside the mosque.

The worshippers were observing their early morning prayer (Subhi) when the gunmen invaded the mosque.

*Nigerian Tribune* gathered that the gunmen, who stormed the village on several motorcycles

and wielded sophisticated weapons, took positions at the entrance of the mosque, after which they embarked on the killing spree.

It was further learnt that the mosque was filled to capacity when the gunmen began shooting sporadically into it, thereby killing 16 worshippers on the spot, while nine others escaped with varying degrees of gunshot injuries.

*Nigerian Tribune* was informed that some of the worshippers escaped

through the entrance which the Imam normally uses.

An eyewitness, Abubakar Salihu, who escaped from the mosque, said the gunmen got to the mosque at about 5:33 a.m.

He said he was lucky to escape through the entrance where the Imam follows.

The source said his father and two of his younger brothers were among those killed, while about nine others sustained varying degrees of gunshot injuries.