

# Gunmen kidnap 60 in Zamfara, kill 15 in Kaduna

## • 3 policemen murdered, oil firm chief abducted in Rivers

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**G**UNMEN kidnapped at least 60 people in a remote community in Zamfara State who were mostly women observing Prophet Muhammad's birthday, residents told *Reuters* on Thursday in the latest wave of abductions to hit the state.

Armed gangs are rife across the North West where they rob or kidnap for ransom, and violence has been increasing as thinly stretched security forces often fail to stop attacks.

That has raised concern about whether residents in the region will be able to vote in the February presidential poll to choose a successor to President Muhammadu Buhari, who is constitutionally barred from running again.

Two residents said gunmen on motorbikes arrived in the Magami Tandu community of the Kaura Namoda Local Government Area on Wednesday evening and shot sporadically.

They took mostly women who were observing Mawlid – a celebration of Prophet Muhammad's birthday which is held between the end of September and the end of November in northern Muslim states, the residents said. "On a daily basis there is killing or abduction, which is leaving us homeless. Please (tell) the government to act and bring justice to us," Abdulkarim Haruna, whose wife was kidnapped told *Reuters*.

The residents said 19 people were killed on Tuesday when gunmen attacked Ryuji community in Zamfara's Zurmi Local Government Area, which is adjacent to Kaura Namoda.

The police spokesperson in the state, Mohammed Shehu,

could not be reached for comment.

### 2 Kaduna

In a related development, no fewer than 15 people were on Friday, reported killed and several others injured by bandits in separate attacks in Giwa, Kajuru and Birni Gwari local government areas of Kaduna State.

In a statement signed by the Commissioner for Internal Security and Home Affairs, Samuel Aruwan, the state government commiserated with the families of the victims who were killed in the attacks.

"On a sad note, the Kaduna State government has sent its deepest condolences to the families of several victims who were killed in attacks by bandits in Giwa, Birnin Gwari, and Kajuru local government areas," the statement said.

It said the state government was informed by security

agencies that bandits attacked Rafin Sarki in Giwa Local Government Area, with 11 locals confirmed killed.

The slain victims, the statement said, were Abdullahi Musa, Adamu Musa, Aminu Nasiru, Adamu Ibrahim, Yau Usman, Ladan Yunusa Saidu, Salisu Abdulrahman, Fati Usman, Yakubu Ya'u, Marwanu Ibrahim and one unidentified person.

The government disclosed that a briefing by security agencies further revealed that bandit attacks on Cibiya and Karamai communities in Kufana, Kajuru Local Government Area, left two people dead and many others injured.

It revealed that bandits equally killed two people identified as Salisu Mai Tireda and Mohammed Maikaba in Damari, Birnin Gwari Local Government Area.

Governor Nasir El-Rufai expressed sadness at the reports

and sympathised with the families of the slain victims, while praying for the repose of their souls.

He said the government was engaging the security forces on the developments and on other fronts.

### 3 Rivers

Also, in Rivers State, gunmen clad in army uniform, on Thursday evening, killed three policemen escorting an oil company executive and then kidnapped the latter.

*Saturday Tribune* gathered that the incident happened on the Rumuokoro flyover in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area.

It was learnt that the policemen were escorting the executive and some workers of the oil company when the vehicle in which they were travelling was intercepted by the hoodlums.

The gunmen reportedly killed three of the policemen during

an attempt to repel the attack.

The exchange of gunfire between the policemen and the hoodlums caused pandemonium in the area with traders and road users running for dear lives.

The assailants, it was said, later whisked away the oil firm chief who was said to be their original target.

The spokesperson of the state police command, Grace Iringe-Koko, a Superintendent of Police, confirmed the attack, saying that the command had launched an investigation into the incident.

She said: "Yes, it is true that three policemen were killed. It is very unfortunate. They were escorting the oil company workers when the incident happened.

"But we are on it. An investigation has been launched immediately into the incident with a view to apprehending the suspects."