

Cattle rustling: Mob kills six people in Zamfara

Published May 3, 2019

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A mob on Thursday lynched six suspected cattle rustlers at the palace of the Emir of Birnin Magaji in Zamfara State.

The Assistant Director, Army Public Relations, Maj. Clement Abiade, who confirmed the killing, however, told The PUNCH that reports at his disposal did not indicate the men were cattle rustlers.

He said, “Reports at our disposal indicated that they were Fulani herders, who were at the palace alongside a Department of State Services official, to secure the release of their animals seized about three weeks ago.

“The enraged villagers, who had been at the receiving end of banditry for a long time, descended on the herders that they mistook for bandits.

“According to reports, the Fulani men took their case to the DSS, and the DSS officials accompanied them to the palace to make their case. They were not armed.”

Abiade, however, warned against jungle justice as it might lead to a reprisal, adding that perpetrators would be brought to book.

But another version of the incident indicated that when the DSS officials and the suspected cattle rustlers arrived at the palace, some residents noticed the presence of a notorious bandit among them and youths in large number laid siege to the palace.

The residents said the emir was not in town when the incident happened and that it took the intervention of some soldiers in town to whisk away some palace officials and the DSS personnel to safety.

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A DSS officer, who was shot in the hand, had reportedly been taken to the hospital for treatment while military personnel had been deployed in the area.