

Bandits kill 93 in Zamfara, gov calls for self-defence, suspends emir

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Zamfara State Governor, Bello Matawalle

Bandits have again killed 93 people in Kadawa village of Zurmi Local Government Area of Zamfara State, while many others were severely wounded.

A local, Mallam Muhammadu Dansani, who narrowly escaped being killed, told *Saturday PUNCH* on the phone that the incident happened between Thursday night and Friday morning.

Dansani said the bandits, who spoke French, invaded Kadawa on motorcycles on Thursday night and shot 93 people dead. He said 67 bodies were seen in the village and 26 others outside the village after the attack.

“The bandits are non-Nigerians. They spoke French and wore long-plaited hair. Most of them were dark and short,” he said.

Dansani lamented that security personnel were nowhere to be found during the hours of the attack.

When contacted, the state Commissioner of Police, Husaini Rabi, said he had visited the scene of the crime in company with the Speaker of the House of Assembly.

Rabi also said those that were killed had been buried according to Islamic rites.

He said, “I visited the scene and mobilised our men to secure the area. Those killed had been buried according to Islamic rites.

“I cannot say the exact number of those that were killed, but the Divisional Police Officer counted over 40 corpses. I visited the area in company with the speaker of the state house of assembly.”

Rabiu described the incident as worrisome, adding that the attackers did not want the farmers to cultivate “anything without paying them money.”

Earlier, the spokesman for the state police command, Mohammed Shehu, had told our correspondent that some corpses were brought to Gusau for burial.

Gov suspends emir

Following the killings in Kadawa village, Governor Bello Matawalle has suspended the Emir of Zurmi, Alhaji Abubakar Muhammad.

A statement signed by the acting Secretary to the State Government, Alhaji Kabiru Balarabe, said, “Governor Bello Matawalle has approved the suspension of Emir of Zurmi, Alhaji Abubakar Muhammad.

“Accordingly, Alhaji Bello Suleiman (Bunun Kanwa) is to take charge of affairs of the Emirate immediately.

“In the meantime, His Excellency has also approved the constitution of a high-powered committee to investigate allegations made against the suspended Emir, on his involvement in the escalating rate of banditry attacks in the Emirate.”

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It’s time for self-defence, says gov

Meanwhile, the Zamfara State Government has cancelled Democracy Day celebrations in the state due to the insecurity situation even as Governor Bello

Matawalle has directed the people of the state to defend themselves against banditry attacks.

Speaking in Gusau, the state capital, on Friday during a prayer session organised by the state government to seek divine intervention against banditry, Matawalle said, “The insecurity situation has defied solution, and as such, people should defend themselves.

“I am calling on the people of the state to defend themselves if bandits attack them. My government has approved that whenever the bandits attack you, do not wait for the security personnel to come to your rescue. You should rise up and protect yourselves.

“My government has also planned to recruit the locals from each community who will be in charge of monitoring their villages to ensure that bandits do not attack the people.”

Matawalle called on traditional rulers and community leaders to ensure that only people of “proven integrity” were recruited. He also urged traditional rulers to fish out the bad eggs in their communities conniving with the bandits.

Meanwhile, the police and troops foiled an attempt by suspected bandits to kidnap pupils at Prelude Comprehensive College, Kujama in Chikun Local Government Area of Kaduna State on Friday.

This followed the receipt of intelligence which prompted the security personnel to mobilise to the targeted school to thwart the approaching bandits.

The development forced the bandits to abandon their plans to attack the school, according to the state Commissioner for Internal Security and Home Affairs, Samuel Aruwan, who made these known in a statement.

Aruwan, however, said bandits barricaded the Kaduna-Kachia Road, where they abducted two travellers, Yusuf Alhassan and Nura Abdullahi.

Also, Aruwan said troops foiled an attack along the Zaria-Kano Road in Makarfi Local Government Area of the state.

“The personnel mobilised to the area following distress calls of the bandits’ activity. One bandit dressed in military camouflage was neutralised, and one pump-action gun was recovered,” he said.

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