

Gunmen kill policeman, abduct 14-year-old girl in Katsina

— 19th January 2018

•Ortom, Police disagree over militia in Benue

Suspected armed robbers have shot dead a policeman attached to WAPA Shopping Mall in Katsina State, and carted away an undisclosed amount of money.

Efforts to get the reaction of the state police command were unsuccessful as the spokesman, Isa Gambo, did not respond to phone calls and text messages.

In Kankia Local Government Area, gunmen abducted a 14-year-old girl.

Father of the victim, Alhaji Salisu Mai-Tiles, said that the gunmen invaded his residence at Sabuwar-Abuja quarters in Kankia at about 1:30am, yesterday.

Mai-Tiles said three well-armed persons broke into his residence and demanded money, while the remaining gang members stayed outside.

“They asked me to give them money, which I did; whatever they asked, we never objected to their demands, to save our lives, unfortunately, they went with my 14-year-old daughter,” he said.

The gang members also blocked Katsina-Kano Road in Kankia, and robbed motorists at gunpoint.

Meanwhile, the Nigerian Police Force have confirmed the existence of armed militia groups in Benue State, with investigations ongoing.

Force/Public Relations Officer, Jimoh Moshood, disclosed this during an interview on a national Lagos-based television programme, yesterday.

Moshood countered claims by Governor Samuel Ortom that there are no such group in the state.

“Yes, they were armed with AK-47 (rifles); we have records, we have footage and you can’t just start arming people. There are a lot of militia groups equally in Benue and we are looking at all those areas to ensure that the actual perpetrators of this mayhem are promptly arrested.

“People who are supposed to ensure that when they observe (you say you have a guard) and report back to the police that would probably do the appropriate thing; if such a guard is armed with AK-47 rifle, how do you control that, how do you prevent such AK-47 (rifle) from going into wrong hands?” Moshood questioned.

On Ortom’s claims, Moshood said: “Yes, I’m disputing that because we have evidence that they were armed with AK-47 rifles. It is equally important for people to know that we are investigating that; we must know the source of these AK-47 rifles. Any organisation that you are setting up, before you can carry firearms, must be approved by the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and it shouldn’t be a prohibited firearm. When you don’t draw the police into this and you arm people, you turn them into militias because you don’t control what they do with these firearms,” he added. The Force spokesman, however, said police have been supporting Benue state government in terms of implementing the law on prohibition of open-grazing in the state.

But, governor Ortom has denied the existence of such militia in the state..

He described the rumour as a way to divert attention from the actual problem on ground.

Ortom said as a law-abiding citizen, recruiting militia was not an option to the insecurity that has bedevilled the state.

He said this in Makurdi, the state capital when the Benue Youth Prayer Group and National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), Benue chapter paid a condolence visit to him, yesterday.

According to him, the state does not “need any militia to tackle incessant attacks on innocent indigenes of Benue because the Lord God Almighty” will help them defeat their enemies.

He said if he had wanted to keep a militia group, he would not have disarmed those who were in possession of illegal arms in the first place.