

12 killed as bandits, vigilantes clash in Plateau

From **Gyang Bere**, Jos

NO fewer than 12 people were killed when bandits and vigilance group clashed at Zak community in Wase Local Government Area of Plateau State.

Daily Sun gathered that the bandits invaded the community, on Monday night, to attack the people while the vigilance group resisted them, which culminated in a gun battle, leaving 12 people dead.

A youth leader in Wase, Shapi Sambo, who confirmed the killings, said the incident occurred at about 9pm, on Monday, when the villagers were preparing to go to sleep.

He said: "When the bandits invaded the community, the villagers tried to resist their attack, which led to the killing of 12 people; nine among them are bandits, three are vigilantes."

The attack is coming one week after the killing of seven soldiers and one vigilante in the same community by bandits.

The spokesman of the Operation Safe Haven, a multi security task force maintaining peace in the state, Major Ishaku Takwa, confirmed the incident, but could not ascertain the casualty figure of the incident. He stressed that the Commander and troops, who repelled the attack, moved to Gajin Bashar community to fight the bandits who had stormed the area to attack the villagers.

The youth leader narrated that "the bandits came on motorcycles in their numbers in the morning. We suspected that they passed a night in a bush close to Zak."

"When people realised that the bandits arrived in the community, they quickly informed Operation Safe

Haven stationed in Zak, and they swiftly mobilised their troops to the general area and repelled the attacks together with the vigilantes. It was a serious clash," Shapi'i added.

Meanwhile, the Police Pub-

lic Relations Officer (PPRO), Alfred Alabo, confirmed the incident and said the DPO in the area has not given him the details of the attack.

The House of Representatives had set up an ad hoc

committee led by Hon. Fulata Hassan Abubaka visited the community last week, with the intention of calming the situation.

The Village Head of Kanpani Zurak, Alhaji Dahiru Ad-

amu, and other traditional rulers in Wase had told the community that bandits and kidnappers had taken over the community and called on the Federal Government to take proactive measures to save the people.

Lockdown in Onitsha as protesting truck drivers block road over trapped colleague

From **Aloysius Attah** and **Jeff Amechi Agbodo**, Onitsha

MOTORISTS and commuters were left stranded for hours, yesterday, in Onitsha, Anambra State, as a result of protest by truck drivers against the activities of touts.

The major roads linking the Upper Iwaka roundabout from all fronts, including the Awka Road, Bridgehead to Upper Iwaka, Owerri Road and Ezeiweka Road, were all blocked following the previous day's (Monday) sit-at-home order, where vehicles and travellers, especially trucks, stayed off the roads in the South East.

It was gathered that the revenue collectors, in a bid to collect money from the driver, chased the truck driver to a gutter trapping the conductor inside the ditch.

The incident angered the truck drivers, who used their vehicles to block the major road in protest, causing serious gridlock for about five hours, between River Niger Bridgehead and Borromeo roundabout, along Enugu-Onitsha expressway, where travellers spent hours before continuing their journey outside the state.

A witness, Ngozi Onyebuchi, said the accident at Upper Iwaka, Onitsha, was caused by the illegal revenue collectors who chased the truck driver to a ditch.

"The truck driver was being chased by the illegal revenue collectors and, in the process of trying to escape, the driver ran into a ditch. When the driver could not control his vehicle, he fell into the ditch and jumped out, but his conductor was not lucky to escape and was trapped for some hours before help came," she said.

A trader at the Onitsha Main Market, Kenneth Okoye, who spent over three hours on

the road while going to the market from Awada area, said: "Relevant agencies should help travellers and other road users passing through Onitsha; the situation is very harrowing."

However, confirming the situation, the Sector Commander, Federal Road Safety Corps, Anambra State, Adeoye Irelewuyi, said the trapped victim had been evacuated alive and taken to the hospital.

"The trapped victim has

been successfully evacuated alive and taken to Borromeo Hospital for proper medical attention. However, the truck drivers are presently protesting against the activities of touts (agberos), which led to the crash in the first place. FRSC personnel and other agencies are trying to appeal to the protesting truck drivers, who blocked the expressway to allow reason prevail," he said.

CAN disowns pastors involved in Ondo church kidnapping

From **Fred Ezeh**, Abuja

CHRISTIAN Association of Nigeria (CAN) has disowned the pastors of the Whole Bible Believers Church, Ondo State, where over 50 children were "kidnapped" and kept in the basement of the church preparatory for "rapture" scheduled to take place in September.

CAN described Pastor Peter Josiah and his cohorts as agents of Satan pretending to be working for God, insisting that no true pastor would claim to know the date of the rapture, because the Bible clearly stated that it is only God that knows the date of rapture. It added that whoever claims to know the date is not only misleading the people, but a fake man

of God.

CAN President, Dr. Samson Ayokunle Olasupo, in a statement by his media aide, Pastor Bayo Oladeji, said that, ordinarily, they wouldn't have made a statement on the matter, but the fact that the church claims to be a Christian church necessitated the response.

He insisted that the pastor in question and his church, the Whole Bible Believers Church in Ondo state, are not members of CAN at all levels, and so, he is not known to CAN.

"But the fact that the church claims to be a Christian church necessitated that we state our position on his practice."

The CAN president, therefore, commended the police for their prompt ac-

tions which culminated in the rescue of over 70 victims from the church premises, thus, suggesting that medical checks should be carried on the victims to ascertain their state of health, physically, emotionally and mentally.

He encouraged all denominations to keep an eye on pastors under them to ensure wholesome Biblical conduct, while members of the churches all over the nation are enjoined to cross-check every teaching from the Bible before believing it.

He called on the police to thoroughly investigate the pastor and his activities, with a view to prosecuting him and his cohorts, if there had been any infringement on the law of Nigeria and the rights of the members in his custody.