

Police kill seven bandits in Niger, as gunmen murder village head's son

FROM JOHN ADAMS,
MINNA

THERE was confusion in the camps of bandits in Shiroro Local Government Area of Niger State during the week following the execution of one of their members suspected to be a son of the village head (name withheld) in the area.

The deceased, popularly referred to as Katako, an indigene of Shiroro, was a member of a gang of notorious gunmen who assist bandits in navigating the nooks and crannies of the areas. It was gathered that Katako also provided the bandits with information on the movement of security agents and victims to kidnap before he met his death after he was accused betrayal by the bandits.

According to a reliable source, Katako was accused of opting out of an operation, which eventually led to the killings of scores of the bandits by the Joint Security Task Force two weeks ago at Chibani in Shiroro.

It was gathered that, three days after the incident, the gunmen followed him to his father's house where they picked him and took him to their camp and shot him.

The body was later released to the family for burial. But this did not go

down well with the father, who, before now, was being accused by the villagers of having a hand in the banditry in the area.

The village head reportedly went to the bandits' camp to demand explanations on why his son was executed. The bandits commander was said to have told the village head that his son betrayed them after he had benefited immensely from them, and threatened to allow his body to rot away without a proper burial.

"Nobody sympathises with him, because the villagers believed that he knows about the activities of the bandits and other terrorists in our area since his son was among them. We have complained to the higher authorities about the village head, but nothing was done," our source said.

Meanwhile, the Niger State Police Command said it had neutralised about seven suspected bandits in Kumbashi village, Mariga Local Government Area of the state.

The police, in a statement by the Public Relation Officer, DSP Wasiru Abiodun, said the gunmen were killed by the force's tactical team with the combined efforts of the local vigilantes in the area after a fierce gun battle, while others escaped into the forest with bullet injuries.