

Police Arrest Suspected Killers of Village Head in Niger

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Laleye Dipo in Minna

Less than one month after gunmen killed the village head of Gusase in Bosso Local Government Area of Niger State, Mallam Abubakar Yahaya, the state police have stated that they have arrested two suspects in connection with the incident.

This is just as youths under the aegis of “Freedom for 56 Under Bandits Save Our Land” have sent a “Save Our Soul” to the Niger State Government for its speedy intervention following the threat by bandits to terminate the lives of 56 victims in their custody if the N100 million ransom they demanded was not paid.

During the attack on the palace of the deceased traditional ruler, his daughter was also kidnapped and taken into captivity.

However, the state Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), DSP Wasiu Abiodun, in a statement made available to journalists in Minna yesterday said

Risku Suleiman, 34, and Haruna Umar, 20, of Kupa village near Garatu on the Minna-Bida road have been arrested in connection with the crime.

Abiodun said the suspects were arrested last Friday at Kupa village during a night sting operation in the area.

According to the police spokesman, during interrogation, Suleiman confessed to the crime, saying he had been in the act of cattle rustling with his father, Suleiman Aga’ala, who is an ex-convict.

In addition, the PPRO said the suspect confessed that he conspired with his friend, one Umar Awara from Lokoja, with eight others from Zamfara State, Idrisu, Shadai, Yeli, Yusuf and others presently at large, with Haruna Umar to commit the crime.

According to the statement, Suleiman confessed that the syndicate was responsible for the death of the village head, and that N1.5million ransom was collected for the release of the daughter recently, with the same amount also collected for the release of Alhaji Hassan Gusasse.

Abiodun said effort was ongoing to arrest Umar Awara and other members of the syndicate “as discreet investigation is ongoing.”

He said the suspects would be arraigned as soon as investigation is concluded.

Meanwhile, following the threat by bandits to terminate the lives of 56 victims in their custody if the N100 million ransom they demanded is not paid, youths under the aegis of “Freedom for 56 Under Bandits Save Our Land” have sent a “Save Our Soul” to the Niger State Government for its speedy intervention.

Not less than 60 villagers were abducted from Adunu and environs in Paikoro Local Government Area of the state last month and taken into hiding by bandits.

A week ago the bandits killed four of the victims and released their corpses to some women in their custody to take to the community to show their seriousness about collecting the N100 million ransom.

In the “SOS” sent to the government and signed by the Co-conveners of the Group, Mr. Sebastian Makarfi and Mr. Gideon Bahago, said that the state government’s intervention is necessary because the community is made up of peasant farmers who could not raise the N100 million demanded by the bandits.

They lamented the silence of the government since the incident occurred, saying “there is yet to be an official government’s visit to Adunu and Kwagana districts.

“The only visit was the ballot boxes accompanied by INEC officials to conduct gubernatorial and states assembly elections in Adunu and

Kwagana wards, which was sternly but firmly resisted by the mourning members whose loved ones were still in the bush in the hands of the kidnappers.”

They further accused the state governor and the political leaders from the area of abandoning the people from these communities to their fate, wondering whether Adunu and Kwagana communities are no longer part of Niger State.

“It is pertinent to note that there is no government school in operation at Ishau, Ammale, Adunu and Kwagana since this January 2023 due to the volatility of the security situation in these communities,” the SOS claimed, adding that the development has resulted “in our children being out of school when we can do something about it.”

“Unless something is done fast the indigenous people of Ishau, Ammale, Adunu, Kwagana, Kaffinkoro, Chimbi and kwakuti will be taken over by the Bandits and made their permanent base,” the youths declared.

They suggested the establishment of “strong police posts in all the aforementioned wards,” adding that “most importantly, a permanent joint task force of military and others security operatives should be stationed within Adunu to check the excesses of these elements.”

Efforts to get official receipt of the SoS from the office of the Commissioner for Internal Security and Humanitarian Affairs was abortive as the Commissioner, Mr. Emmanuel Umar, was said to be out of the state.