

By Sikiru Abdul-Raheem,  
Katsina

**N**OTWITHSTANDING the holy month of Ramadan when the tempo of events are usually lower than usual as a result of the fasting, the people of Katsina generally have had to contend with the fear of armed robbers in addition to their spiritual obligations.

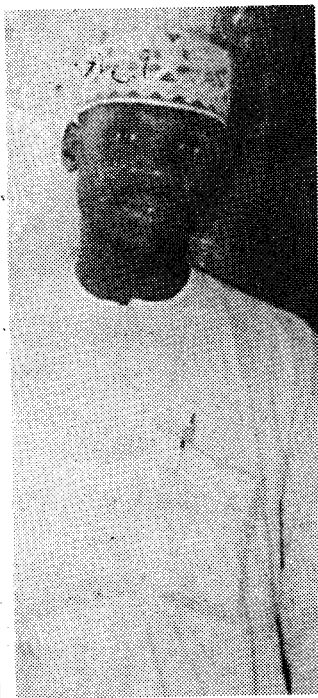
Thursday, 28th of September, at about 7:30pm, shortly after breaking his Ramadan fast for the day, a permanent commissioner in the Katsina State Local Government Service Commission, Alhaji Badamasi Barau Sabuwa, on his way from Katsina, narrowly escaped death as dare-devil armed robbers in police uniform rained bullets at him. The incident occurred near Mararrabar-Maska, along Funtua-Zaria highway. *Saturday Vanguard* gathered that the gunshots were fired by men wearing complete police uniforms. They had taken control of the Funtua-Zaria road that Thursday, and, like policemen do, were checking vehicles at the checkpoint they mounted, and, in fact, had robbed many vehicles that had used the road.

"The suspects (mistaken for policemen) fired bullets aimed at my head, but I was very lucky that God intervened and I dodged it but it still brushed my nose and mouth, as you can see marks near my nose and mouth", Alhaji Badamasi Barau explained to *Saturday Vanguard*.

However, it would seem that Alhaji Barau had been having a run with bandits in recent time. A little over three weeks before the September 28th incident, about twelve armed robbers attacked Barau's home in Sabuwa, broke in through the window, ransacked the building and carted away an undisclosed amount of money including his wives' jewellery.

**R**eacting to the incident and the spate of robbery attacks, Honourable Shehu Tanimu Sabuwa, former speaker of Sabuwa Local Government Legislative council, said that "it is very unfortunate that Alhaji Badamasi Barau Sabuwa was attacked twice within three weeks by armed robbers. This has further exposed the insecurity in the country. We would be very grateful if our governor, Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'adua, could come to the rescue of the people of Sabuwa LGA. We, in Sabuwa LGA, are blessed through farming but we share borders with Niger and Kaduna states which has further exposed us to armed robbers", he said.

Barau had been receiving sympathy visits from various people, including the Sabuwa Local Government chairman, Alhaji Shafi'u Madawaki Inono, who paid him a visit with his council members last Friday. He disclosed that security solutions now top his priority and added that his administration shall leave no stone unturned in guaranteeing safety of lives and properties in the area. He



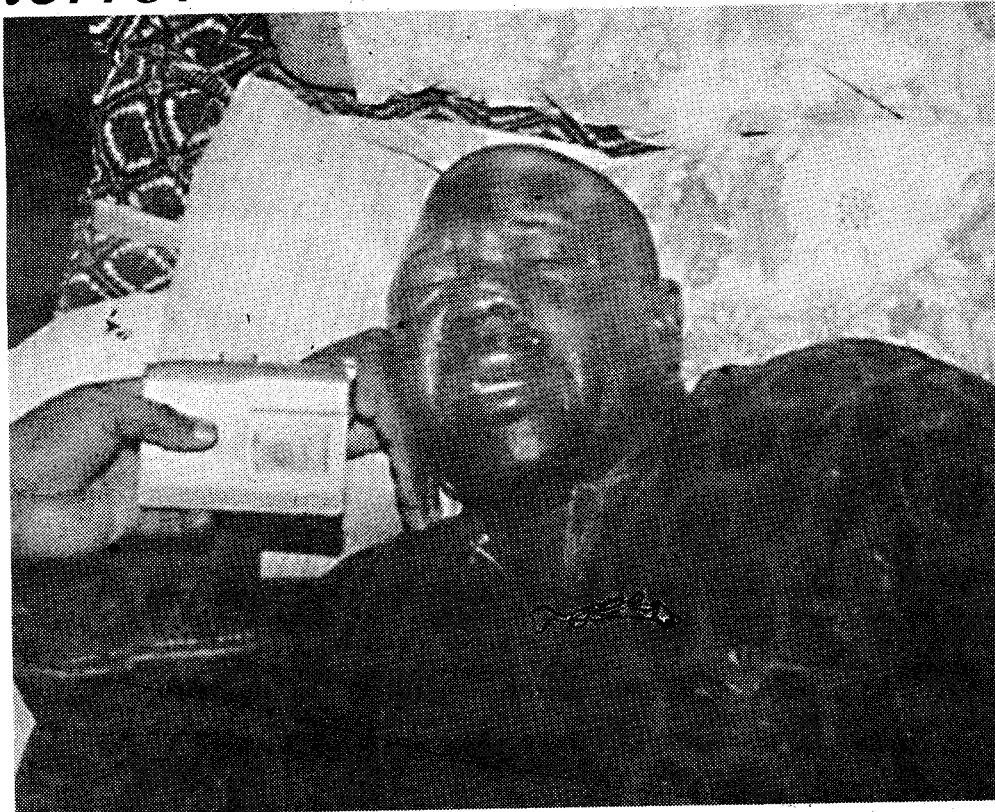
●Shehu Tanimu Sabuwa



●The bush where the body of the Fulani woman was found

# Katsina gasps in the throes of robberies, killings

## ●As robbers in Police uniform unleash terror



●Shot at and twice robbed: Alhaji Badamasi Barau

*The incident occurred near Mararrabar-Maska, along Funtua-Zaria highway...the gunshots were fired by men wearing complete police uniforms. They had taken control of the Funtua-Zaria road that Thursday, and like policemen do, were checking vehicles at the checkpoint they mounted*

also said that he has re-organized and re-equipped the vigilante groups in his

area, and will continue to give maximum logistics support to the Police in the

area. That is not all. As the whole country was round-

ing off Independence celebrations on Sunday, 1st October, little did the people of Machika, also in Sabuwa Local Government Area of Katsina State, know that the day would end on a sour note. As they made to break the day's fast, an alarm was raised; the dead body of a Fulani woman, Mallama Rahab, the wife of Mallam Dankarami was found at a nearby bush. She had been strangled to death by unknown assailants.

Concerned residents of Machika and Mararrabar Maigora, all in Sabuwa Local Government, are still wondering and confused over what might have led to the dastardly killing of Mallama Rahab who sold Nono (cow milk).

A neighbour who refused to be named recounted that the woman sold Nono (cow milk) everyday at Mararrabar Maigora, except on Wednesdays and Sundays. On those days, she took her nono to Dandume market, a major market in the area. When she left home on that fateful day, Sunday 1st October, 2006, she never had the premonition that the evil men were planning to eliminate her. She left home as usual in the morning and succeeded in selling her nono, but on her way home, she was attacked by still unknown assailants and strangled to death.

Following Barau's experience with men of the underworld, residents of Mararrabar Maska in Funtua local government and Sabuwa are now living in

fear of their lives following incessant raids by robbers. To this end, they have called on the Katsina State Police Commissioner to quickly come to their rescue by prevailing on his men to be alive to their responsibilities. They spoke through Shehu Tanimu Sabuwa, former Speaker of Sabuwa Local Government Legislative Council.

**H**e lamented that four robbery incidents were recorded in the area within a period of three weeks without police intervention, prevention or arrests being seen to have been made.

"Between September 6th and September 28th 2006, four robbery incidents have been recorded on Sabuwa and Funtua road where residents were dispossessed of their valuables worth thousands of naira. The permanent commissioner was attacked twice (both at home in Sabuwa and along Funtua-Zaria road). Other victims include Mallam Danladi Baraza whose children were tied down by the robbers during their operation, Ustaz Alhaji Mustapha, Managing Director of Ijaba Bread, a baking outfit in Sabuwa, who was dispossessed of about N200,000 and Alhaji Yusuf Jan-Wuya, all based in Sabuwa", the former council speaker said.

Katsina people are worried stiff over the spectre of robbers in Police uniforms, making many of them unwilling to stop at any checkpoint, especially at night. Last year, two police stations and five police vehicles were set ablaze by angry residents of neighbouring Giwa Local Government Area in Kaduna State when some policemen were caught robbing people along Mararrabar Yakawada along the same Zaria-Funtua road.

"All the robbery cases were usually reported at the Police stations and up till now, no arrests have been made when it is a known fact that the Police is familiar with all the black spots and criminal hideouts in the community. No suspected criminal(s) had been arrested all this while or raids carried out at the identified places while all these bad elements are walking the streets freely," a resident of Funtua complained.

However, *Saturday Vanguard* gathered that the reaction of the Police to the outbreak of crimes in the country indicates that they have lost track of their fundamental duty as law enforcement agents in the society. Michael Ajayi, a Kaduna-based social critic, speaking with *Saturday Vanguard* said:

"Even with the attendant presence of the Police on the streets today, crimes still abound; lives are still held in jeopardy. This gives room to the question agitating the minds of millions of Nigerians—has the Nigeria Police gone moribund that they can no longer contain the perpetrators of these anti-social vices? It is ironical when the hunter suddenly becomes the hunted."