

Horror: How bandits tortured, killed abducted victims daily —Trader recounts ordeal

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...Says ‘We paid N750,000 for our freedom’

By Kingsley Omonobi

A yam seller, who identified himself as Yusuf, said several persons abducted by armed bandits terrorising Kaduna State, were first tortured mercilessly and finally killed if they refuse to ‘cooperate’ with their kidnappers.

The 45-year-old Yusuf disclosed this in an audio clip obtained by PRNigeria, during interrogation with an intelligence officer.

While speaking in Hausa, the yam merchant, who was recently abducted, spent eight days and eventually regained his freedom, said he and two others paid N750,000 as ransom before the bandits released them.

Recounting his ordeal, the 45-year-old said he and seven others were kidnapped after a village called Masalaci in Kaduna State.

He recalled: “After we passed Masalaci, during our journey, a man emerged suddenly from a bush and shouted. From there we didn’t know what happened, but we started hearing sporadic gunshots. It was then that our car abruptly stopped. Our driver and a passenger in the front were instantly killed.

“After they came up to our bus, they abducted the rest of us and led us into the bush. They collected all our money and then wrote ‘For Sale’ at the back of our shirts. The bandits descended on us, beat us mercilessly as they continued to lead us into the bush.”

Yusuf said the bandits threatened to eliminate them if they refuse to disclose the worth of their entire wealth.

According to him, he and some of his colleague-kidnapped victims lied that they had millions, just to save their lives as the bandits brutalised them.

He said: “After that, they handcuffed us. Two people died instantly as a result of severe beatings. A Fulani woman who told them about her family background was freed. After we had spent five days in captivity, they released the two other women abducted alongside us. This was after the two women also revealed the identity of their family lineage.

“But the bandits held us and refused to free the rest of us. One of us that told them he does not have any contact of his relatives was mercilessly tortured. They later

tied him on a tree and shot him. A few days after we were kidnapped, the bandits brought in a woman, a doctor and a Nupe man from Wushishi, who they later killed.”

A lecturer at the Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) Zaria, according to Yusuf, was also abducted, but added that the ABU Zaria staff was kidnapped from his home.

He said the lecturer agreed to pay them N1.4 million instantly, and also sell his house to add more money as ransom.

“But the bandits declined, saying he has other assets. So, they tortured him brutally. As at the time I left the bandits’ den, the doctor’s left hand was already paralyzed,” he added.

Several persons killed

According to the ‘traumatized’ yam trader, the bandits, in the eight days, he spent at their criminal den, abducted and killed several persons every day.

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He also disclosed that the bandits kidnapped and eliminated a soldier and a mobile police officer, then took away both their khaki and rifles.

Yusuf further noted that they (the abductees) all found it difficult to escape as they were chained in their legs.

He said: “But not only that, the beating we received from the bandits made us weak, and unable to flee.”

According to him, none of the security agencies came to their rescue while they were held, hostage. He, however, said they saw military jets occasionally hovering around the area they were kept.

Why we took to banditry

The 45-year-old Hausa man disclosed that some of the bandits freely chatted with them when he was in captivity.

“Some of them said they embraced banditry and kidnapping when they could not find any other meaningful job to do after their cattle were rustled. That is why they

took to kidnapping,” he said.

We paid N750,000 for our freedom

On how he escaped, Yusuf said the kidnappers demanded N20 million each for the three of them who were travelling together. But they only paid N750,000 for their freedom.

He added: “The fervent prayers of our loved ones, indeed, were also instrumental to the bandits releasing us. And after they freed us, one of the bandits escorted us to an unknown place and returned to his colleagues.

“We thank God we returned home alive, but sincerely, the beatings we received from the bandits when we were in hostage, were enough to kill us.”