

Gunmen kill village head in Niger, remains buried in forest

●Free 5 others after payment of ransom ●Police arrest village head, 10 others for banditry

By Wole Mosadomi

MINNA—THE village head of Madaka in Rafi Local Government Area of Niger State, Zakari Ya'u Idris, has been reportedly killed by gunmen over the inability of his people to raise money demanded as ransom.

The octogenarian was in captivity for a week before he was finally killed.

He had earlier been abducted during which he spent about three months in the forest before he was released a month ago and re-abducted last Sunday before he was murdered.

It was gathered that the bandits got in touch with relatives of those abducted alongside the village head and demanded ransom.

While five of the abductees' families were able to raise the money for their release, the relatives of the village head could not raise the N800,000 ransom that led to his torture and eventual death in the kidnappers' den.

"One of those released by the bandits after paying his ransom revealed that the village head was always beaten since he was abducted and that from all indications, he was tortured to death. The corpse of the deceased was immediately buried in the forest," the source added.

Gunmen numbering about 50 invaded Madaka community last Sunday during which they murdered three persons and abducted the deceased for the second time.

Those killed during the invasion included a leader of the vigilante group in Madaka, Isyaku Alhassan, his son, Abdulhamid Isyaku and one other person.

Besides those killed and abducted, scores of other persons were injured while many houses were set ablaze.

Meanwhile, District Head of Gunna, who was abducted in Yakila in the same local government area is yet to regain freedom.

A source revealed the gunmen were yet to get in touch with family of the District Head to demand



The late Zakari Ya'u Idris

ransom.

Rafi Local Government Area of the state had been under the siege

banditry.

Police spokesman in the state, Wasiu Abiodun, said in a

of bandits in the past few weeks with scores of people killed and abducted.

Police arrest village head, 10 others over alleged banditry

Meanwhile, the village head of Tungan-Iliya in Mashegu Local Government Area of the state and 10 other persons have been arrested by the state Police command over a l l e g e d

statement, yesterday, in Minna that following intelligence report received on Christmas Day, a police team went on a clearance operation of suspected bandits' hideouts in Tunga-Iliya forest.

He said: "The team engaged the suspected bandits in a gun duel and arrested 11 of them while five others were fatally wounded."

"Among the suspects arrested were the village head of Tunga-Iliya and one Summaya Bello, who harbours and gives information to bandits."

Abiodun said the police had started further investigation into the matter and that the suspects would be charged to court later.

He added that also on December 25, "police received information that gunmen invaded Unguwan Gambo community in Rafi Local Government Area where they kidnapped four persons."

"One of the victims was rescued unhurt while efforts to rescue the others and arrest the hoodlums were in progress."



BURNT: Church of Brethern in Nigeria (E.Y.N Church) burnt down by insurgents in Hawul LGA, Borno State, Saturday night.



Man killed, property razed as communal strife hits Enugu community