

Gunmen kill 21 persons in Katsina, Imo

By Chinonso Alozie & Ogalah Ibrahim

NO fewer than 21 persons were reportedly killed by gunmen in Katsina and Imo states, yesterday.

In Katsina State, 13 persons were reportedly killed by gunmen, who stormed Bakori-Funtua axis of Katsina State, yesterday, while women and children were also kidnapped in Bakori LGA of the state.

According to a source, the terrorists began their operation from Dakuwa village, late Monday, looting shops before proceeding to Gidan Kanawa, where they killed three people.

Not satisfied with their adventure at Dakuwa and Gidan Kanawa village, the hoodlums proceeded to Cugar community in Bakori LGA yesterday where they killed additional 10 persons and abducted their village head, Umar.

In the course of the operation, the terrorists also raided the communities looting valuables, razing houses, cars and motorcycles in the adventure that lasted till yesterday, the source disclosed.

Confirming the report, Abdullahi Umar, the son of the kidnapped village head, said: "We started hearing gunshots around 1:00 am on Tuesday. This threw our community into commotion. I saw my father heading towards the village centre but was escorted back to his residence by gun-wielding men, who ransacked our homes, then took him away with several children and women. They also rustled animals and burnt down houses, cars and motorcycles."

Abdullahi, however, noted that the hoodlums are yet to contact the community or family members of those kidnapped to make any demand.

The slain victims were said to have been buried around noon yesterday according to Islamic rites, a source said.

While confirming the attack, police spokesman in the state, Gambo Isah,

said: "The security operatives are on top of the issue and details will be provided in due course."

8 killed in Imo

In the oil community of Mmahu, Egbema, headquarters of Ohaji/Egbema Local Government Area of Imo State, a gunman killed over eight persons.

Confirming the killings, one of the youth leaders in the community, who introduced himself as Romano, said the suspect had killed about four persons in the community last weekend.

He said: "This young man in question has killed more than four persons since last week. He would come out and shoot

anyhow. We were told that he escaped from Owerri Prison last year.

"Even when the community invited the security men to arrest him, he ran away. We are still looking for him.

"So, he comes out to shoot people and run back to the bush and nobody can catch him. After some days he would again come out and shoot people and run away."

Another eyewitness told *Vanguard*: "So far, over eight persons have been killed in the area. This happens almost daily. We must join hands and stop this young man that has been killing people anyhow."

At press time, the state Police Public Relations Officer, PPRO, Michael Abattam, said: "The command is aware of the incident," but he did not confirm the number of those who were killed.

...Kill Islamic leader in Delta

By Emma Amaize, Ibrahim Hassan-Wuyo & Ugochukwu Alaribe

SUSPECTED gunmen reportedly shot dead Secretary of Delta State Council for Islamic Affairs, Musa Ugasa.

Musa was reportedly murdered while returning from a mosque where he went for evening prayers at Uloho Avenue, Ughelli, Delta state.

Public Relations Officer of the council, Issa Edogamhe, who confirmed his assassination, said: "He was attacked on his way from the nearby mosque where he went to offer his evening (Ishai) prayers. He was assassinated along Uloho Avenue, Ughelli."

Also, an Islamic leader in the state and former All Progressives Congress, APC, presidential aspirant, Mumakai-Unagha, described the assassination of Musa as callous.

Lawyer's wife abducted in Abia

But, the whereabouts of the wife of a Senior Advocate of Nigeria, Chibuike

Nwokeukwu, abducted by gunmen in Aba, Abia State, is still unknown.

Vanguard gathered that Mrs Nwokeukwu was abducted at the entrance of her husband's residence, Ukaegbu Road, Ogbor Hill, Aba, on her way from an event.

Sources told *Vanguard* that the gunmen fired shots before taking the woman away in a tricycle and abandoned her SUV.

Contacted, Police Public Relations Officer, Geoffrey Ogbonna, confirmed the incident but gave no details.

Kidnappers release Kaduna priest

Meanwhile, the abductors of Rev. Fr. Joseph Danjuma, the Catholic Priest kidnapped by terrorists at St. Monica's Catholic Church, Ikulu Parish, in the Kauru Local Government Area of Kaduna State, Sunday, has been released.

The release of Father Shekari was announced, yesterday, by the Catholic Diocese of Kafanchan in a statement released by the Chancellor, Catholic Diocese of Kafanchan, Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Uchechukwu Okolo.