

Bandits kill 8 in Zamfara over failure to pay ransom

BANDITS identified with notorious kingpin, Dankarami, have killed eight of the 10 men they kidnapped in Zurmi in Zamfara State for failure of their relatives to pay a N6 million ransom, residents of the town have said. The bandits abducted the victims last September 1 after a failed attempt to attack the local government headquarters.

Having failed to access the town, residents said the bandits laid siege and abducted the 10 people in the early morning of the following day.

Two escaped

A youth leader in the Zurmi, Abdullahi Muhammad, told *PREMIUM TIMES* over the phone that two weeks after the abduction, two of the 10 victims escaped from the bandits' hideout not far from Zurmi town.

"I was among those who received them (victims) at the local government secretariat after they escaped. They told us that the bandits were torturing them for their refusal to give them the numbers of their relatives to discuss ransom," he said.

He said the bandits later got the numbers of some of the relatives of those still being held and started communicating with them.

Eight killed

According to Muhammad, the bandits kept changing the ransoms and how to deliver the money, which delayed the response from the relatives.

"Only those two who escaped made it, the other eight were tortured to death by the bandits. First, they said N50 million but changed it to N20 million the following money. After those two phone calls, they didn't call for close to 10 days, then called back again," he said.

According to the youth leader, the bandits kept threatening that they would kill the victims if the families did not respond to their demands, "but the

dilemma of the families was that they (bandits) were not even straightforward in their demands."

The victims

PREMIUM TIMES gathered that the eight slain victims were all men.

They were named as Idi Mijin Hajia, Malam Zubairu, Murtala Nagoma, Umar Muhammad, Siddi Na umara, Habibu DanBala, Yahaya Attah and Zayyanu Nagoma.

Efforts by *PREMIUM TIMES* to speak with any of the relatives of those killed failed. But another resident of Zurmi, Usman Kabiru, said he was part of the initial negotiations through Idris Nagoma family.