

### **Attacks resumed yesterday'**

The raging attacks which resurged yesterday, also spread to the Zuma community in Bwari Area Council.

On December 24, bandits invaded the Garam community, which is five minutes drive from Bwari in the FCT, killing a pastor with the Redeemed Christian Church of God, and kidnapping 13 other persons.

On December 28, bandits again invaded Kuduru in the FCT, kidnapping 18 persons.

Similarly, on Friday, December 29, bandits invaded Azu in Niger State, killing three people and kidnapping eight others.

However, following the ceaseless attacks, residents of Garam decided against observing the crossover service on December 31, 2023.

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A resident of the community who pleaded anonymity said most churches in the area observed the crossover service between 5pm and 8pm, while a handful of churches with adequate security observed the crossover service between 10 pm and 4am.

The source added that the bandits returned on January 2, 2024, kidnapping an entire family, adding that the soldiers stationed at Azu, a neighbouring community, only arrived after the bandits had left.

He said: "Due to the fear of bandits, most churches did not observe crossover service on December 31. Some churches observed the service between 5 pm and 8 pm. It was only MFM that observed the service from 11 pm to 4 a.m.

"Though soldiers patrolled the community during the day, it has not stopped bandits from attacking the people at night.

"On January 2, an Igala man was attacked, and the bandits kidnapped the whole family. They came with their tools to force the gate of the house open. They operated for two to three hours. The sound of their guns forced the vigilance team to flee. The soldiers arrived after they had left."

Another resident said people were moving out of Garam in droves, while those who built houses there have sought refuge in other places.

He said the sprawling community was now being deserted as the military appeared to have ran out of ideas to tame the bandits.

The source added that it appeared the bandits were targeting those with cars who could easily muster ransom payments, if kidnapped.

It was gathered that the bandits again entered Garam on Monday night and operated till the early hours of Tuesday and reportedly abducted three persons.

"The man who most residents described as NEPA staff (Abuja Electricity Distribution Company Staff) was unlucky as bandits broke into his house, forcibly kidnapped him, his wife and nephew and escaped with them on motorcycles into the bush," a source said.