

FCT Herders' Community Cry Out Over Killing, Detention Of Members

A community of herders residing in Tungan Kwasau village, off the Dei-Dei-Zuba expressway, in Bwari Area Council of the FCT, has alleged harassment from the...



indept

By Adam Umar

Fri, 5 Apr 2024 4:07:49 WAT



A community of herders residing in Tungan Kwasau village, off the Dei-Dei-Zuba expressway, in Bwari Area Council of the FCT, has alleged harassment from the police,

which according to them, has so far led to the killing and detention of its members, as well as confiscation of its cattle.

The herders, who said they had been living in the area for more than 30 years, also accused the security operatives of extorting money from them running into millions of naira meant to facilitate the release of five members of the community currently being detained by the police.

Ladidi Muazu, a housewife, said she lost three of her neighbours during police raids in the community while her brother in-law, Magaji, was arrested about four months ago, and that lately her husband's cattle, along with others, were confiscated.

However, the police earlier declared the said cattle as exhibits recovered from Jibi Forest.

- [Nigerian manufacturers capable of producing vaccines, Tinubu tells GAVI](#)
- [Akpabio to Falana: Ningi's suspension a parliamentary decision](#)

But Ladidi faulted the claim, saying the cattle were confiscated by the police around their hamlet, explaining that policemen arrived in the area around 6am accompanied by local security personnel.

She said, "As usual, every one of us ran for our own dear lives going by previous experiences where our members who summoned courage to stop were either shot dead or arrested."

She further said that she later met the policemen to find out their reason for confiscating their animals and that, "They told me that the cows were owned by thieves, but I faulted the claim, telling them that the cows belonged to my husband and his late brother's heirs. They asked about one Ilu, linking the cows to him, but I faulted the claim, telling them that the cows were owned by my husband and his late brother's children.

She added that her husband, Muazu, who fled and left the animals on sighting the police, did not sleep at home anymore for fear of what would happen to him.

She gave the names of the detained members of the community as Magaji, Dauda, Ibrahim, Salisu and Haruna.

She explained that, “The police arrested them from their respective homes; only to declare that they were arrested from a hill in the bush; which is not true.”

Harira Dauda is the wife of one of those arrested, Dauda, who has been in police detention for about four months.

She said, “My husband and I were sleeping inside our hut when policemen arrived. The room was locked, and after we came out they arrested him half naked. They later said that he was arrested inside the bush; which is not true.

“For about four months now, he remains in their detention. I visit him occasionally, and a lot of money was demanded from me with the promise that he would be released.”

Another housewife, Gwamma Magaji, said her husband, Magaji, and her younger brother were arrested on the same day.

She said, “My husband was picked from our room, while my brother was arrested from another house nearby.

“During the arrest, they warned them to confess to committing the crime or be shot dead. But my husband, who I was following closely, told them that he didn’t commit any crime to warrant any confession. That was how they left with them. Recently, they promised that they would release them on bail by last Friday afternoon. But, unfortunately, instead the police came back on Saturday and confiscated our cattle.”

She said before the arrest of her husband, her son who was about 20 years old, was killed about eight months ago while in the bush rearing their cattle. `

She lamented that, “I don’t know how to continue with life in such a condition, with no husband, no cattle and no peace of mind. About half of our wealth has been ruined in this struggle of visiting the police.”

Salisu Yusuf was one of the few men sighted during the visit to the community as most of the men had fled the area for fear of being arrested.

He lamented that his people, both males and females, no longer had peace of mind in the area, which according to him, had “all these years” been a peaceful community occupied by herders.

He said, “We lost about three members directly to the security men’s raids, as they would come here pursuing everyone on sight, especially males. There was also a time when a boy was shot dead by the security men. He was crossing the highway along with his cows when they came across him and the next thing they did was to pull out their gun and shoot him dead.”

Our correspondent further learnt that some of the herders’ hamlets now fall within people’s plots; a situation that may lead to land disputes.

However, some of the herders told Daily Trust that so far no one had challenged their stay in the area.

Our correspondent also gathered that some female members of the affected families are also staying away from their hamlets, and that instead, they now sleep in uncompleted buildings out of fear of raids by the police.

Muhammad Tukur Sarki is one of the community leaders shuttling between the affected family members and the police to secure the release of the detained members of the community.

Speaking to Daily Trust, Sarki said on getting the information of the arrests he went to the former SARS headquarters where he was told by the police that the matter was under investigation.

He further said, “A few days later the police returned to the homes of the arrested people and carried out an investigation. They promised us that they would be released, but they are yet to do so. They have not also taken them to court.”

The FCT Police Command’s spokesperson, SP Josephine Adeh, earlier shared a message about the discovery of cattle, among other exhibits, from a kidnapper’s den in Jibi Forest.

She was, however, yet to respond to a message sent to her over the herders’ allegations.