Bandits Kill 9, Kidnap 15 In Zamfara

By Leadership News 3 days ago News



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A criminal gang killed nine farmers in Zamfara State on Friday, an official and residents said yesterday.

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The bandits riding motorcycles rounded up some farmers working on their fields outside Jangebe village in Talata Mafara district, kidnapping around 15 others, the sources said, according to CHANNELS TV.

"Bandits attacked the farmers and killed nine of them," Yahaya Yari Abubakar, political administrator of Talata Mafara district, said.

"The attackers kidnapped around 15 other farmers, and they are yet to make contact," said Abubakar, who attended the funeral of the nine who were killed.

The victims included the head of the village's vigilante self-defence group and his five comrades, along with three residents, said Abu Zaki, a Jangebe resident.

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"Everybody is now afraid of going to the farm for fear of being attacked," said another resident, Bello Ahmadu, who gave the same toll.

Bandits maintain camps in a huge forest straddling Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna and Niger states, in unrest that evolved from clashes between herders and farmers over land and resources into a broader conflict fueled by arms trafficking.

The state government has recruited vigilantes and anti-jihadist militias to assist the military in fighting the gangs.