

Herdsmen kill two policemen, three others in Taraba

Fulani herdsmen have killed five persons, including two policemen, in Bali Local Government Area of Taraba State.

The marauders also injured dozens, torched over 100 homes and displaced thousands of residents, particularly Tiv farmers.

Police spokesman Joseph Kwaji told *The Nation* that the two policemen were killed on Wednesday at Kwana Daban, Mayo-Kan village in a gun battle with the herdsmen.

He said: "Some Fulani arsonists had invaded Kwana Daban village, shooting and burning houses.

"A motorist alerted our police patrol team, which rushed to the scene to stop the hoodlums.

"On getting there, the Fulani opened fire and killed two of our men and carted away their rifles.

"The body of an unidentified person –a civilian- was found at the scene."

Kwaji said the arsonists were armed with sophisticated weapons and were over 100.

An eyewitness, Edward Tule, said two other people were killed yesterday at Nahuta, close to Mai-Haula, in Bali Local Government Area. Among the deceased was a pastor.

Tule said the herdsmen mounted two road-blocks at Nahuta, where they stopped vehicles to search for their victims.

Another eyewitness, Peter Anande, said: "They were looking for Tiv people to kill. I came face to face with death but was lucky to escape.

"I boarded a commercial vehicle and was heading to Jalingo. On getting to Nahuta, we saw a road block manned by Fulani herdsmen, who stopped many vehicles.

"I knew they were hunting for Tiv people to kill. So the passengers advised the driver to turn back.

"As we started heading back, just a few metres away, another group of Fulani militants came out to block us.

"We did another U-turn and were heading back to where we came from. Suddenly, a police van drove pass us and we followed it.

"When we got to the same spot, the attackers had run into the bush. They had killed two people and assaulted some passengers.

Over 100,000 Tiv residents have been displaced in Bali, Gassol, Wukari, Ibi, Donga and Takum local government areas.

The traditional ruler of the Tiv in Bali, David Gbaa, said he has lost over 35 subjects, including a member of his traditional council, Peter Unongu.

Gbaa added that another six persons, including children, have died of hunger and illness in an Internally Displaced Persons camp.