

Breaking News

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Suspected herdsmen kill two, kidnap 22 in Abuja, demand 12m

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At least two people have been killed, while 22 others, including children and women, were kidnapped after suspected Fulani herdsmen attacked some farms in Rafin Daji, Gurbe Ward, Abaji Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

PUNCH Metro can confirm that the incident happened on Wednesday in the farming community which shares a boundary with Lapai Local Government Area of Niger State.

A resident in the area, Aruba Barde, confirmed this to our correspondent.

Aruba, who spoke in the Hausa language, said, “We have discovered two dead bodies on our farms resulting from the attacks by Fulani herdsmen. However, we are still searching the farms to ascertain the total number of people killed during the attack on Wednesday.

"The kidnappers also confirmed to us that they abducted 22 people, and they're demanding N12 million ransom for the freedom of the victims."

A brother to Aruba, Ibrahim Barde, who also spoke to our correspondent, confirming the incident, said that exactly 13 members of his family, including some women, students and children, a couple that just got married last year, an aged woman, and a tractor driver were kidnapped.

He said, "We have confirmed that 22 people were kidnapped from different farms in the Rafin Daji area of Abaji, and the kidnappers are Fulani herdsmen. When they spoke to a relative through the phone this morning using one of the kidnapped victims' phone, they asked us to pay the sum of N12 million for the release of the 22 victims."

"Residents have also confirmed the death of two persons resulting from the attacks on the farms by Fulani herdsmen."

Barde, however, stated that the tractor driver, who was among the victims, escaped from the kidnappers' den.

He said, "The tractor driver, who was among the 22 kidnapped victims, has escaped, and he informed us that his boss was killed during the attack."

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Confirming the timeline of the attack, he said, "The incident happened two days ago. The Fulani herdsmen attacked the farms when my younger brothers, wives, and children were on the farm. They had just finished for the day and were about to leave the farm when the kidnappers struck.

"My families went to the farm with a pickup car. So, by the time the driver got into the car, the kidnappers approached him and threatened him with a gun, forcing him to stop the car."

"They were 13 of them on the farm including three women, and seven children between the ages of 15 and 17. They kidnapped all of them including a tractor driver, and burnt one of the tractors on the farm.

"They also went to the neighbouring farms and abducted more people. So, the total number of people kidnapped is 22, and we just discovered this morning that two men whose identities are yet to be known were killed during the attacks."

Barde, who asked the government and security operatives to intervene, said his family and relatives of other victims have been devastated.

He said, "We have been so worried, and we hope the government and the security agencies would intervene and bring our families back safe and sound."

When contacted, the FCT Police Command Deputy Public Relations Officer, Omotayo Oduniyi, said the police had confirmed the incident, and are currently in search of the kidnappers with the aim to rescue the abducted victims.

Oduniyi said, "The incident happened in Rafin Daji, a boundary community between Niger and the FCT. The farmers were on their farm lands working when gun men outnumbered and kidnapped them.

"Upon receipt of this information, a combined team of police officers from various tactical and intelligence units of the Command, including Destiny Hunters, Vigilantes, and local hunters stormed the forest, combing it aggressively for the rescue of the victims even as I speak.

"Monitoring and surveillance of the community also continues, as we're working tirelessly to bring the perpetrators to book."

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