

Ondo residents lament as gunmen kill two, kidnap six

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① **B**ANDITS have attacked some residents of Arimogija in the Ose Local Government Area of Ondo State, killing two people and kidnapping six others in the community.

A resident of the agrarian town, who identified himself simply as Patrick for security reasons, said the bandits carried out the attacks on the farm and along the road while residents were traveling.

He said, "On Tuesday, a man was on his way to farm with his son along Ugbogoro farm in Arimogija community here; they were ambushed, hacked and taken away by the herdsmen. The man eventually died while they went away with the son.

"Last week (penultimate week) the herdsmen kidnapped three persons but they released the victims after paying ransom on (last) Monday.

② On that Monday too, a Volkswagen Passat station wagon was attacked and all the passengers on board sustained gunshot injuries. The victims are Onorogun, Meshach, Mama Ovie, Super, Chinedu, and Super's son. Super was eventually killed, while Mama

Ovie is in a hospital receiving treatment for gunshot wounds and the rest were released after ransom payment."

Meanwhile, residents of Ijagba, another community in the area, on Thursday, expressed displeasure over incessant attacks, kidnappings and killings of their people by suspected herdsmen, saying communities in the council were under siege.

The Prime Minister of the community, High Chief Sunday Ogoh, appealed to President Bola Tinubu and the state Governor, Mr Rotimi Akeredolu, as well as security agencies in the state to come to their rescue.

He said, "For the past two years we have not been having peace of mind in our community with a lot of kidnappings, killings, burning of our houses and farmlands by these Fulani herdsmen.

"Just three days ago (last week), we lost one of our illustrious sons, Isaac Odeh, while the man's son, Solomon Odeh, was also attacked, on their way to the farm. Apart from that, in that area, we also lost one of our former Chairman, Mr Bola Adelegbe.

"During a search for the victims in the bush, it was discovered that Mr Isaac Odeh was killed by the abductors, while his lifeless body

was found.

"On the same day, the remains of Mr Isaac Odeh were deposited in a mortuary, while a ransom of N400,000 was paid to the abductors to release his son.

"It is now imperative, due to the ugly incidents, to carry out and seek the support of the government and all relevant authorities to protect our lives and property. We can no longer go to the farm or sleep with our two eyes closed.

"This problem is not only limited to Ijagba. These Fulani herdsmen do operate in Imoru, Molege, Arimagija, Ute and Okeluse. That axis, there is no security. So, we are appealing to the state government that we need a strong military base."

The state Police Public Relations Officer, Mrs Funmilayo Odunlami, confirmed the incident, adding that investigation was ongoing.

"We are aware of the situation in the community and we are on top of the situation with a view to arresting those behind the attacks. I can assure you that with our investigation, we will arrest the perpetrators," the PPRO said.

Meanwhile, gunmen on Saturday

kidnapped a Muslim cleric, Alhaji Ibrahim Oyinlade, at Asolo Camp in Uso community, in the Owo LGA of the state.

Sunday PUNCH gathered that the cleric was working on his farm when hoodlums took him away to an unknown destination.

A family source said the hoodlums had contacted the family of the victim but they had yet to demand ransom.

"They contacted the family shortly after they kidnapped him, informing them that he was with them. But they have not demanded ransom yet," the source said.

He noted that the matter had been reported to the Uso Police Division.

The police spokesperson, Odunlami, confirmed the incident.

She said, "Around 6pm today (Saturday), a report was made at the Uso Divisional headquarters, that the Chief Iman of Uso went to his farm in the morning and did not return. He was later traced to the farm by his people. They saw his phone and his vehicle intact, but couldn't find the man. The DPO and his men with local vigilantes are currently in the bush to trace the whereabouts of the man."