

# Bandits kill man, abduct 13 children on Kaduna road

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Late Amedu. Photo: Family

| Gbenga Oloniniran

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Suspected bandits have killed a 53-year-old baker, Mr Tijani Amedu, and abducted his 13 relatives, who are mainly children, travelling alongside him, in the Katari area of Kaduna State.

The Edo State-born businessman's brother, Rasaq, in a telephone interview with our correspondent on Wednesday, said the incident happened on January 6, 2024, while the victims were returning to Kaduna after visiting Warri, Delta State.

Rasaq said, "They came to visit for the Christmas and New Year holidays. My siblings and their families came to visit. But they got attacked by bandits when they were going back to Kaduna, using two buses. I was told the bandits started shooting on seeing them. The first bus drove through them but the second bus stopped. My elder brother and 13 kids were on the second bus. The bandits took all of them."

He said family members later got to know when the children started communicating from their captivity.

He said, according to the children, "My elder brother's head was hit and he fell (leading to his death)," adding, "but the 13 kids are still with them. They started (ransom) negotiation from N200m, but now, we're at N50m."

Rasaq said he last communicated with the kidnappers on Tuesday.

"We found the body of my brother on Saturday and buried him the following day, January 7," he added.

He said the family could not raise the N50m, noting, "That's a lot of money."

One of the mothers of the children who did not want to be named refused to make any update noting, "Not for now, what we are after is how our children will be out."

But Zinab, the wife of Amedu, who confirmed her husband was killed, said the family was seeking help on the matter.

"They killed my husband and they went away with 13 children," Zinab told our correspondent in a telephone interview on Wednesday, adding that the family was seeking "prayers and help from anybody who can help. We have 13 of our children with them."

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When contacted on Wednesday, the Kaduna State Police Public Relations Officer, ASP Mansur Hassan, asked for details of the incident.

He then said, “I will get back to you.” He had yet to do so as of the filing this report.

Kidnappings have recently become a disturbing menace in the North, North-Central and some southern states of Nigeria including Ogun and Lagos.

Members of the Middle Belt Youth Forum led by its president, Brent Kane, had threatened to hold a protest on Wednesday in Abuja against the rising cases of kidnapping in the region and other parts of the country. The protest was later suspended and rescheduled.

The planned protest followed the trending news of scores of abductees who were taken away by bandits from the Sagwari Estate Layout in the Dutsen-Alhaji area in the Bwari Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, last week.

The Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Nyesom Wike, said on Wednesday the Federal Government would not condone any form of bandit attack in Abuja.

Wike spoke at a town hall meeting he had with residents of the Bwari Area Council of the FCT.

He convened the meeting following increasing reports of kidnapping for ransom and killing in the FCT.

On Tuesday, Wike met with heads of security agencies, top FCT Administration officials, and chairmen of the six area councils, where he stated that the administration was aware of the security situation in the territory.

Speaking on Wednesday, Wike said, “Security is one of the key priorities of Mr. President’s administration. Yesterday, Mr President summoned a high-level security meeting, which includes all the service chiefs, the Minister of Defence, and my humble self, because of recent attacks, particularly in Bwari. And so, currently, it is one of the key priorities that Mr. President’s Renewed Hope Agenda will want to face squarely.

“It is no longer going to be business as usual. Everything has to be done to protect lives and property. Without protection of lives and property, then we have no business in government. My coming here today is to assure you that we are very serious. All those criminals, bandits, enough is enough. We will do everything in our power to make sure that we will not allow this to happen again. That is why just this morning, Mr. President has given me approval to provide everything required to the security agencies. And just like what Etsu-Bwari and Sarkin-Bwari said, it is not by merely talking, we are serious.”