

# Gunmen kill two Benue IDPs, demand N5m for abducted farmer

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Bandits

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Bandits have killed two farmers in a fresh attack on the Umogidi community in the Entekpa Council ward of Otukpo Local Government Area of Benue State.

Two other community members were injured and another was abducted by the bandits in the renewed attack, said to be aimed at displacing the people from their ancestral home.

According to locals, who did not want to be named, the deceased recently fled their homes due to a similar attack but decided to go to their farms in Umogidi when they were killed on Tuesday.

The other three were also said to be on their farms when the bandits attacked them and whisked away one of them while the other two were reported to have been injured.

One of the locals who spoke to journalists on the phone on Thursday said, “They (bandits) are now demanding N5m as ransom for the kidnapped victims.

“All of these victims are IDPs who went to fetch food in their farms and were attacked by the same armed herders who chased them away from home in the first place.”

Confirming the incident in a telephone chat with journalists on Thursday, the Caretaker Chairman of Otukpo LGA, Alfred Oketa Omakwu, said the victims were IDPs who went to the farm on Tuesday but were attacked.

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Bandits kill two farmers in Benue

He confirmed the killing of two people, adding that the bandits again attacked another village, Upu in Otukpo on Wednesday but were repelled by soldiers who engaged them in a gun battle from the afternoon until 7 pm.

The chairman noted that there was no record of death in the Wednesday attack because of the swift response by soldiers.

Omakwu said, “The IDPs are camped in St. Charles Primary School while most of them as they are going to their farms to fetch farm produce, rented one room for their family to stay in Adoka central.

“They (victims) left Adoka where they were taking refuge and went to their farms at Umogidi when they were attacked, two of them were killed.

“Yesterday (Wednesday) there was another attack in Upu village, they (armed invaders) opened gunfire on the village, the soldiers were there, so they engaged them and chased them to the bush. They exchanged gunfire till 7 pm and they (armed invaders) ran away. There was no casualty.”

Efforts to get the reaction of the police spokesperson, Catherine Anene, were not successful as her phone line did not connect.