

# Benue: Suspected herdsmen kill kidnapped victim after collecting N5.5m ransom

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From Scholastica Hir, Makurdi

Gunmen suspected to be herdsmen have reportedly killed a farmer, Mr Terungwa Shaku, weeks after they held him hostage and collected the sum of N5.5million as ransom.

Our correspondent gathered that Shaku, who hails from Akor village in Nzorov Council Ward of Guma Local Government Area (LGA) of Benue State, a border community to Nasarawa state, is known for his farming prowess and also business man who sells drinks at the Akor village market.

Nzorov Council Ward is home town of the immediate past Governor, Chief Samuel Ortom.

It was gathered that he was kidnapped by suspected herders and was held hostage for over two weeks before he was killed.

A local from the area, who didn't want to be named for fear of victimization, told newsmen that after his kidnap, his abductors contacted the family and demanded for N10 million as ransom.

"But the family members pleaded with them and after much negotiations, paid N5.5 million to the kidnapers.

"Unfortunately, Shaku was found dead at the point were he was supposed to be released."

The source said the incident caused serious fear among the villagers causing many to flee their homes for fear of attacks.

The local said villagers, particularly, residents of Akor and adjoining villages in Nzorov Council Ward have deserted the area as some were seen evacuating their belongings to neighbouring villages.

When contacted, the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO) Benue State Command, SP Catherine Anene said she does not have the information yet.

Also speaking, Special Adviser to Governor Hyacinth Alia on External Security and Liaison, Lt. Col. Alexander Ashungu rtd, said he is not aware of the incident. He promised to make contacts to confirm exactly what happened.

Meanwhile, a close relative of the deceased who informed the incident said “It is true. Akor, is my village. He (Terzungwe) owns a provision shop in Akor. Early last year, Fulani herdsmen had attacked him.

“But this time around, the herdsmen kidnapped him, just before the new year and took him away for about two weeks. They demanded a ransom of N10 million but his family negotiated with them and they arrived at a ransom of N5.5 million.

“Unfortunately, the herdsmen killed him at the same spot where they had directed the family to drop the ransom. What happened is that he was shot and killed by his abductors.

“The relatives dropped the ransom at the spot they were ordered to and had barely moved out of the area when they heard gunshots and immediately returned to the spot and saw his lifeless body sprawled out on the ground. I believe he has already been buried.”

