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MAKURDI

Suspected herdsmen kill tax collector, kidnap three others in Benue

Suspected Fulani herdsmen on Friday killed a tax collector, Mr. Joseph Ochaigwu at Opepa, Ijaha I in the Riverine area of Agatu Local Government Area of Benue State bordering Gwer West Local Government Area of the state.

The deceased was killed at about 8pm while relaxing in his compound.

One of the deceased's sons, Jonah Joseph confirmed the report to newsmen.

"I was sitting near my father, the Fulani who killed my father were about five in number. They came, shot

him on the head and chest. "After killing my father, they shot severally in the air before leaving while some of us hid at different locations in the compound".

A source, Echewija Ochobepo who spoke via telephone said, "We heard sporadic gunshots at Joseph's compound. We ran away for a while but later came back and met his lifeless body with gunshot wounds on the head and chest".

Sunday Telegraph gathered

that the invaders also on Thursday kidnapped three young men from two villages in Agatu local government of Benue state.

Those kidnapped were identified as Silas and Samson from Odejo and Alade Olotu from Ugboju.

A witness, Iyu Goche said, the victims were lured by the kidnappers to come and buy cows and hold them on reaching there.

He added that the kidnappers had established contact

with relatives of the victims through a phone belonging to one of the kidnapped victims demanding a whopping N2 million ransom as a condition for their release.

As at the time of filing this report, the kidnappers were alleged to have rejected the N1million raised by the community members, insisting that the N2 million must be met before the captives would regain freedom or be killed.

It was gathered that this is

the first kidnapping that has taken place around the axis.

Killing of farmers have become daily occurrences in the Gwer-West/Agatu axis as well as Guma, Okpokwu, Ado, Ogbadibo and other local government areas of the state as herdsmen have established camps in various forests and have refused to leave.

In the Gwer-West/Agatu axis for example, herdsmen have established camps in (Akpiti) forest in the Riverine village of Ogbowu near Achukpa with the sole aim

of killing farmers.

It would also be recalled that in the past, herdsmen were not staying in Gwer-West/Agatu axis during the rainy season as they would cross back to Nasarawa to enable farmers in the axis to carry out their farming activities.

However, things have changed as they now stay permanently regardless of the seasons in the vast farmlands of Gwer West, killing farmers as they vowed not to allow farmers to carry out their occupations.

