

## FACTCHECK

# How 66 Fulani were killed in Kaduna villages

— Contd from page 1

Hours later, the governor's media aide, Samuel Aruwan, issued a statement giving details of the killings.

Aruwan said, "Security agencies today (Friday) reported the recovery of 66 bodies that were killed in attacks by criminal elements on various dispersed hamlets in the Maro Gida and Iri axis of Kajuru LGA.

"The settlements affected include Ruga Bahago, Ruga Daku, Ruga Ori, Ruga Haruna, Ruga Yukka Abubakar, Ruga Duni Kadiri, Ruga Shewuka and Ruga Shuaibu Yau."

The governor's spokesperson said among the victims were 22 children and 12 women while four wounded persons "rescued by the security agencies are now receiving medical attention."

But the Violent Incidents and Election Atrocity Fusion Centre (VIAFUC) for #NigeriaDecides2019 said in a statement that it contacted residents and community leaders of Kajuru and "trawled all possible sources and sent in two additional fact finders to verify these claims" and concluded that "sadly, the alleged attack and killings claimed by the Governor did not occur."

VIAFUC also accused the governor of "deliberate falsehood" capable of setting ablaze a fragile neighbourhood and of compromising the smooth running of election operations and of the safety of all involved in the elections."

The Adara community, in a statement, also described the comment by the Kaduna State Government as "deliberate lies being manufactured against us as a people by the governor of Kaduna state, Malam Nasir el-Rufai."

"The governor went ahead to list the number of villages that were attacked but deliberately excluded Ungwan Barde where our people were killed. He also gave the gender statistics of those allegedly killed and the tribe of the victims but again mischievously left out the 11 Adara people who were killed."

## Findings on claim number one:

Findings by Daily Trust which involved speaking to various stakeholders that included security agencies and survivors of the attacks revealed that the attack on the eight Fulani settlements took place and about 66 people or even more were murdered.

The General Officer Commanding One Division of the Nigerian Army, Faruk Yahaya, said: "When information came, men of Nigerian Army, under their officers along with villagers...to access. We have shown you the other area in that village, where according to information, the residents were lured to that riverine and were slaughtered.



■ Two-year-old Bashir had seven bullets lodged in his right arm before surgery  
Photos: Shehu K. Goro

"A total of 37 were said to have been buried there. You have seen the grave there and you have also seen elements of their materials that were on the ground, including some traces of blood. 500 metres from there, you see this village, you can see what happened, also burnt and further.

"Now information has it that it also spread to other villages; various distances from here, some, one kilometre, some two kilometres. You know how the Fulanis are, they are far apart. That's the information we have."

Kaduna State Police Commissioner Ahmad Abdurrahman also confirmed that some arrests had been made in connection with the incident and that the suspects will be charged to court as soon as investigations are completed.

## How we survived attack

Daily Trust reporters were able to trace some survivors of the attack who are receiving treatment at a hospital (name withheld on request) in Kaduna. They include two toddlers, a pregnant woman and a young man.

Seven bullets were said to have been extracted from the right hand of Bashir, a two-year-old and five bullets from Ibrahim, a four and a half-year-old after an operation on Saturday.

Hussaina Saidu, the pregnant woman who sustained injury in her right hand, was too shaken to speak to our correspondents.

However, one of the victims, the toddler's grandmother, Fatima Daku, a resident of Unguwar Dorawa in Kajuru, said she does not know why their hamlets were attacked.

"I was at home around 6am when I just heard commotion only for me to come out and see my neighbours running. One of them told me that some people with guns are attacking Fulani hamlets," adding that "I barely escaped as one of them ran after me asking me to come back so that I will be killed."

"I have never seen this kind of thing, they attacked and killed men, women, children and even the aged, and it was like they came to wipe out the Fulani in the area," she said.

On his part, Isyaku Saidu, a resident of Maro, who escaped with bullets in his left arm,



■ Fatima Daku

narrated how it happened.

He said, "I was not even in the vicinity where they were initially attacking, but they meet me where I was grazing my cows and attacked me. They shot me in my right hand and killed a small boy that was with me."

Asked if there was no incident in the area before the attack, he said, "We heard that some gunmen attacked Unguwar Barde on Sunday, a day before we were attacked, but we do not share boundaries with them and it is because of that attack that they attacked us. Maybe they think we are responsible for the attack."

On her part, Hadiza Jibril, whose husband Ardo Jibril saved many people by evacuating them from the hamlets, said some Adara people hid them in their houses if not maybe they would have been killed.

"Around 7am on that faithful day, we learnt that some Fulani settlements where attacked. Initially we wanted to move, but we were assured by our friends who are Adara that there was no cause for alarm. It was later that day, when we heard that people are being killed that we took refuge in our Adara friend's house."

She said some of the corpses were burnt to ashes while others were killed in holes in the bush by the assailants.

## Claim No.2: Were the 66 Fulani killed on Friday?

The leadership of the opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), in a statement by its publicity secretary, Abraham Catoh, said the incident did not happen on Friday but in the early morning of Tuesday, 12 February, 2019, at about 1 a.m, at Gindin Gada, Maro Ward of Kajuru Local Government.

The Adara community also faulted the state government on the idea of the time the attack was said to have occurred



■ Hussaina Saidu, a pregnant woman receives treatment after the attack



■ Hadiza Jibril

They said the governor insinuated that the incident happened on the eve of the election.

"But the truth is that the incident took place between Sunday 10th February, and Tuesday 12 February 2019 in Ungwar Barde in Kufana District, where 11 innocent Adara people were earlier killed without any provocation."

## Findings on claim number two:

Findings by this newspaper revealed that neither the governor nor his spokesperson said the attack occurred on Friday.

When contacted, Aruwan said the attack on Fulani settlements occurred on Monday through Tuesday, but because of the remote nature of the area, the story got to security late and started search for bodies on Wednesday and concluded on Thursday. And 66 bodies were discovered and buried in a mass grave in the presence of some Fulani leaders.

He said El-Rufai was briefed Friday morning by members of the Kaduna State Security Council on the violence and the casualty figures. The council comprises that GOC One Division Nigerian Army, AOC Nigerian Air Force, Commandant Nigerian Navy School of Armament Technology, Commissioner of Police and Director DSS.

The briefing, he said, formed the basis of the governor's submission to the media as Chief Security Officer of Kaduna State.

The Chief Imam of Kasuwan Magani Imam Nuhu Shaaban said 66 corpses were found in one single grave and most of them were burnt beyond recognition. He said search is still on by security agents. He thanked the local government chairman, security agents and journalists helped them by visiting the area.

## Claim No.3: Were there killings before that of 66 Fulanis?

The Adara community said there was an attack on Ungwan Barde on Sunday by suspected Fulani gunmen where 11 people were killed.

## Findings on claim number three:

Daily Trust investigations uncovered a series of violence in the Kajuru area, mostly between the Adara and Fulanis.

For instance, on Monday 11 February 2019, at about noon, security reported that there was a raid targeting a family at Sabon Tasha village in Kajuru LGA leading to the killing of four persons.

The attack, according to security reports obtained by this newspaper, took place between 10 pm and 11 pm on the night of Sunday 10 February 2019. The assailants were said to be suspected bandits.

However, at about 5.30pm on the same Monday 11 February 2019, there was another report that a number of pastoralists were seen fleeing from villages around Iri and Maro and seeking refuge around Kasuwan Magani and Katul Crossing in Kachia Local government area.

By the morning of Tuesday 12 February 2019, it was clear that several households of pastoralists were affected by violence. The matter was reported to security agencies. By noon of same day Tuesday 12 February, the military deployed its personnel to intervene. The soldiers mobilized to the affected areas and by evening, they rescued fleeing persons to safety and evacuated some wounded persons to receive medical attention.

From Wednesday 13 to Friday 15 February, military personnel combed up the affected villages and bushes in the general area around Iri, Maro and other settlements.

By this, it was correct to say that there were killings before the killing of 66 Fulanis. This is because there are precedents. As recent as 2018, a clash occurred between the Hausa community and the Adara youths at Kasuwan Magani where after some of their youth were allegedly attacked, the Adara youths also mobilized to get back at members of the community.