

Death toll in Kajuru killings now 130 - El-Rufai

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Governor Nasir El-Rufai of Kaduna State yesterday said that it was 130 persons that were killed in villages in Kajuru local government area of the state, and not 66 he previously disclosed.

Briefing State House reporters after a security meeting presided over by President Muhamamdu Buhari at the Villa attended by Governors Jibrilla Bindow (Adamawa) and Kashim Shettima (Borno) as well as heads of security agencies, El-Rufai, said those questioning whether the attacks took place or not were "grossly irresponsible."

He said investigations had revealed that the Kajuru attack was a deliberate attempt to wipe out certain communities.

He said: "I think as the governor of the state, and everyone knows me and my records of public service. I would not be irresponsible enough to stand before the media and say something has happened that has not happened."

"I don't work based on telephone calls for rumours. As governor of the state, the first thing I receive every morning is a security briefing on what happens in the last 24 hours. That is the first thing I read and I ask questions and I work on the basis of security briefings from the experts, the Garrison Commander, the commissioner of police, the head of the Air Force.

"We have every security agency in Kaduna state and they send me briefings including the DSS. I work only on that basis. Anybody that wants to contradict what I said should have superior information and it is impossible for you other than the president of the country to have superior information that I have about my state.

"So, people are being grossly irresponsible, I don't know what their agenda is. But, I know there is a prevailing narrative in the Nigerian media that only certain lives are more important than others. We see that clearly in the slant of reporting and the denial.

"The fact that you are still asking me these questions two days after we have

proved all doubts that all those people claiming that this didn't happen, they first said I lied, that it didn't happen, then they started saying, no, the numbers are not what they are.

"And now, what we are hearing, the last report we got is that, over 130 people were killed not even 66. And the Fulani leaders are providing the names of all these people, we have the list and we will release it to the press.

"And I don't want to .. but we can release pictures of the people killed and how the army had to be there to help bury them two days after they were killed because the bodies were decomposing, but some people are being irresponsible, they are pretending this has not happened because it does not fit their ethnic or partisan narrative.

"Everyone is capable of retaliation, it is not a matter of pride, in a civilised society, for you to say I can retaliate or I am retaliating or this is a reprisal attack. I am surprised that some people even people mention that with pride that these people were killed so, we did the reprisal attacks and they are still walking the streets. We are going to go after them."

Also speaking, Kaduna State Commissioner of Police, Ahmad Abdulrahman, said a total of 11 suspects had been arrested in connection with the killings.

"We intended prosecuting those arrested today (yesterday) but as I am talking to you now, we are making more arrests," he said.

Our correspondents report that Kajuru has remained calm since the incident occurred.

Several sources in Kajuru and Kasuwan Magani confirmed that the people had been going about their normal businesses.

One of the Fulani youth leaders, Yusuf Garba, said six more bodies were recovered at Maro on Monday.

He said they were informed that more bodies had been recovered in the other settlements, but said he could not confirm the number.

Gan Allah Fulani Development Association of Nigeria, in a statement yesterday by its national secretary, Ibrahim Abdullahi, urged the state government and the security agencies to ensure that the perpetrators of the killings in Kajuru are brought to book.