

in the North East, North Central, North West- Kaduna and Kano who have turned to refugees in their own country. So we have a lot of work to do."

The minister observed that SURE-P through its programmes and projects is fast-tracking the development of the country, adding that the collaboration would further enhance its interventions to the people.

According to the Minister, "We need an holistic master-plan. We need a framework in which our interventions would reach every Nigerian and help us carry out our functions. We cannot get it right in this country without planning," the Minister said. Responding, the Chairman of SURE-P General Martin Luther Agwai (rtd) noted, "Planning in Nigeria is not strategic enough. It is often short term." He therefore called on Nigerians to always embark on long term planning for holistic development of the nation

The SURE-P boss while noting that the Minister on National Planning is a member of SURE-P Committee equally stated that the National Planning Commission has guided SURE-P to achieve its goals through monitoring and evaluation, which he said has helped it assess the impact of SURE-P interventions on the lives of Nigerians.

Gunmen kill scores, injure others, torch brewery in Taraba

From Charles Akpeji Jalingo

THE ancient town of Wukari in Wukari Local Government Council of Taraba State, which serves as the headquarters of the Jukun kingdom, has again been engulfed by crisis, which started at about 5a.m yesterday. The violence has allegedly resulted in the death of scores of persons while several others sustained various degrees of injuries. Some of the casualties, *The Guardian* learnt have been evacuated to hospitals in the neighbouring Benue State. *The Guardian* reliably gathered that the crisis was ignited by unknown gunmen who stormed the town at the early hours of the day and set ablaze the brewery depot located behind the palace of the Wukari monarch. While some sources put the records of persons so far killed to be between 49 to 55, other sources, which include the police and the Red Cross, are yet to make public the records of casualties, as a gun battle is still raging as at the time of filing this report. After setting the brewery on fire, the unknown gunmen, according to an eyewitness

"started shooting sporadically," which according to him led to the death "of many persons."

Speaking on the upheaval, the State Police Public Relation Officer (PPRO) ASP Joseph Kwaji, said the situation is under control stating that "peace has been restored." This, according to him, was achieved through the joint efforts of the police, the military and other security personnel. On the number of casualties, he said this is yet to be made known to him stating, "I have not got any record yet, may be later." Member representing Wukari 2 at the State House of Assembly, Daniel Ishaya Gani, told *The Guardian* "the problem is insecurity because there is no enough security personnel on ground." Gani urged acting governor to make available adequate security in the area, expressing sadness that it is only a few military personnel that have been stationed there, the numbers, which he said couldn't effectively contain any breakdown of law and order.

On the number of casualties, he said, "I have being hearing

that the military have being shooting a lot of violent boys that have refused to leave the crisis areas."

State Secretary of the Red Cross Society, Lucky Naboki Agema told *The Guardian* on telephone that "at about 5am today, we woke up to discover there was shooting all over the town, but we don't know who is responsible."

On the figure of casualties, he said, "for now there is high number of casualties, but since the crisis is still on, we cannot tell the exact numbers but the casualty is very high." President of the Youths of Vision Wukari, Barrister Tsa-asen Luka Agbu, said "at about 5am this morning, some gunmen invaded the town and burnt down the brewery and as if that was not enough, the "unknown people," he said began to shoot all over the town, the situation which, according to him developed into the violence, which he said eventually overwhelmed both the military and mobile police stationed in the town. He expressed sadness that Wukari has again been enmeshed in "another crisis" after several crises in the past few months, which he be-

lieved was being sponsored by "some top politicians in the state and from the area." "Prominent persons are sponsoring the crisis. It is their strategy to destabilize the area," Luka Agbu said. The community leader stressed that Christians and Muslims in the area have resolved to "stay together as one," a situation, which he said, "these people are not comfortable with." He alleged that those sponsoring the crisis "want the crisis to continue so that there would be more security votes for them to siphon." "There is also this ulterior motive to stop the people from voting in the forthcoming elections," stressing that "they want to ground Wukari Local Government Council to a standstill." Corroborating Agbu, another source in the area told our reporter on telephone that "so far the casualty figures is uncertain yet because the gun battle is still ongoing, but I can authoritatively tell you that over thirty people have been killed and the records of those with injuries are high too."

The source also accused some top politicians of been spon-

soring the upheaval, noting that "they don't want us to vote in the coming election and they don't also want the Federal University of Wukari here."

Travelers through the road to the neighboring state of Benue and southern parts of the country are being forced to seek for alternative routes as security men manning the highway are turning vehicles plying the road back to Jalingo.

Commissioner for Information, Culture and Tourism, Atte Sule Kundu, in response to *The Guardian* enquiry said, "how can somebody who is in Jalingo be behind that crisis," retorting that "I am not aware of that situation." He assured that the Acting Governor, who has just been conferred with the title of Sardauna Mambilla, can never and does not have any hand in the crisis as it is being speculated.

Kundu, who noted that Taraba State "is a rumour-mongering state, urged the people to desist from engaging in false rumours, stressing the need to always confirm "any news before making it public."

Biafra group seeks Jonathan's intervention over detention of leader others