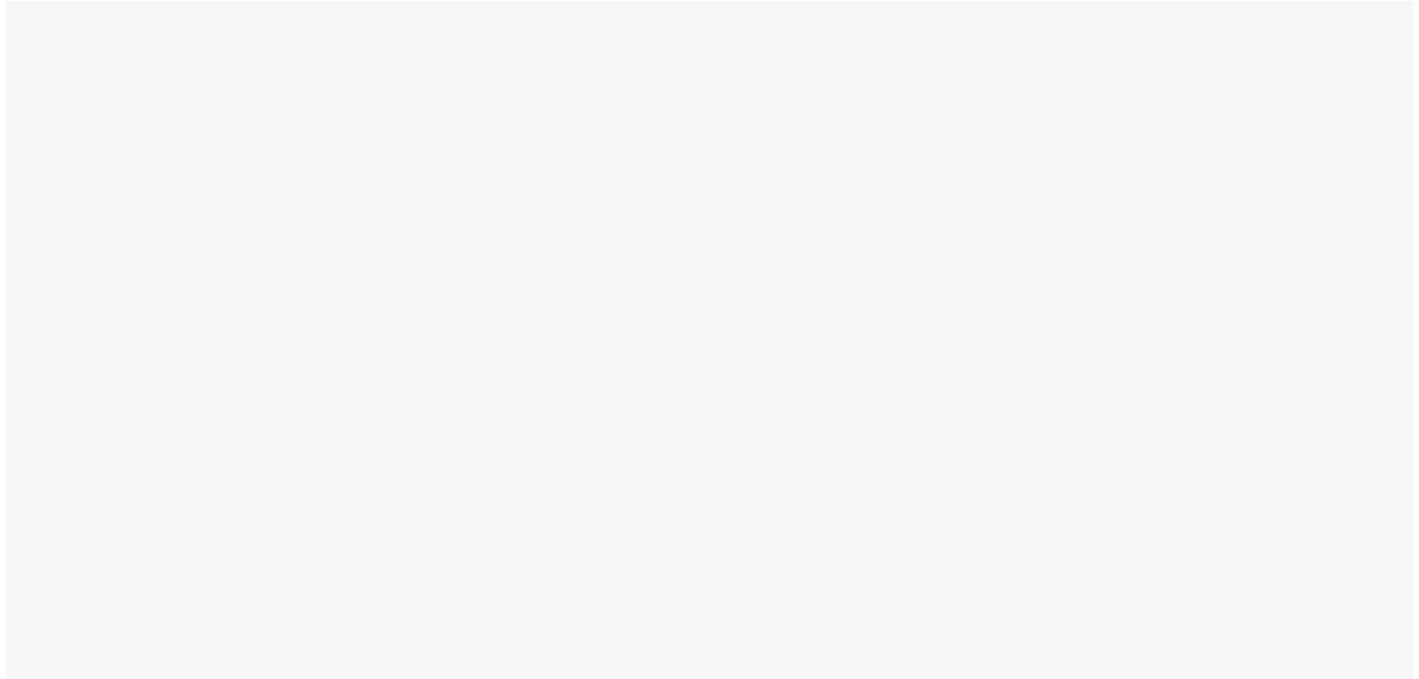


Boko Haram regrouping in Nasarawa, Sule tells Buhari

• Seven soldiers killed

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By Bolaji Ogundele, Abuja

Suspected member of the terror sect, Boko Haram, are now relocating to Nasarawa State in numbers, causing security concerns, Governor Abdulahi Sule alerted President Muhammadu Buhari on Friday.

The governor briefed the President on the on the issue yesterday after which he spoke to reporters.

According to him, the Boko Haram members were dislodged from a location along the Abuja/Nasarawa borders last year, only for them to resurface at the Nasarawa/Benue State borders.

They are already wrecking new forms of havoc, he said, amidst reports that bandits killed seven soldiers in the state on Monday.

He said some of the Boko Haram elements active in the Nasarawa State belong to the Darussalam group that was dislodged from Niger State.

Some of them were killed during the joint security operation, and about 900 others arrested.

The governor maintained that those arrested confirmed their membership of the Boko Haram insurgency group.

Sule said Nasarawa had continued to have security challenges, noting that having briefed the president, he is confident that action will be taken to curtail the menace.

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Speaking on the security situation in his state, the governor said “We thank the security forces that they have been able to dislodge them, but now, they have gone back and gathered at our border with Benue and they are causing a lot of havoc.

“Therefore, it (this meeting) was an opportunity as Mr. President wanted to know, and I briefed him. I strongly believe that just like decision was taken last time to take care of this issue, another decision will be taken.”

Asked how he was certain that the criminals he was talking about were Boko Haram and not bandits, the governor said: “First and foremost, it was easy for us to know who these people are.

“If you remember, they used to gather at a place called Utu in Toto Local Government Area (LGA). When I came here the last time, I appealed to Mr. President.

“Then, the department of State Services (DSS), the Police, the Air Force, and the Army had a joint operation and they were able to dislodge them.

“When they dislodged them, a lot of them were killed. Some of them ran away and left members of their families. We took hostage about 900 members of their families in Lafia, including children and wives.

“The Special Forces, which we have in Doma, Nasarawa State, took the hostages. A lot of interrogations were done and most of them confirmed that they were indeed Boko Haram. In fact, they gave us the name of the person who used to be like the second-in-command to Shekau.

“So, during the interrogation, they confirmed themselves that they were indeed Boko Haram. Some of them said they were remnants of Darussalam group that were dislodged from Niger. They came, merged, and became Boko Haram. That is how we got our confirmation that they were indeed Boko Haram. They said it themselves.”

PremiumTimes reported on Friday that seven soldiers were killed in the state during an attack by bandits only last Monday.

The soldiers were allegedly ambushed in a forest along Mararaba/Udege road in Nasarawa Local Government Area.

The soldiers were on a mission to rescue some residents who had been abducted by bandits and taken into the bush.

Asked about mining operations in the state, Governor Sule said more attention would subsequently be paid to the mine areas.

“The other question, Nasarawa, being the home of solid minerals, and anywhere where there are solid minerals, there are a lot of illegal mining activities. Coincidentally, these people are not interested in solid minerals. Unlike the situation in Zamfara, the people that we have seen don’t engage in mining activities.

“But your question now makes to start thinking about something. So far, no mining site has ever been attacked. When they attack people, they don’t kidnap people from mining sites. And we have a lot of mining activities in the State. But most of our mining activities are not exactly where these people are located.

“But in Toto, we have a lot of mining activities around Ugia, and where these people settle is actually Utu. We have some mining activities in Udege and they went to settle on the hill of Aguagua Aigodege.

“Now, I see a little connection there. And we have mining activities where they are at the moment at the border. Now that you have mentioned it from your question, maybe we can look at it”, he said.



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