

Gunmen, again, attack two LGs in Kaduna

Bandits attacked three communities in Sokoto, killed 16 —Tambuwal el-Rufai meets Buhari

Olakunle Maruf | Sokoto with Agency Report

GUNMEN, in the early hours of Tuesday, invaded Maro village in Kajuru Local Government Area of Kaduna State, as well as some parts of Kachia Local Government Area, razing several houses, while injuring many residents.

The *News Agency of Nigeria (NAN)* reported that Maro was one of the villages that came under attack two weeks ago.

Although, the police were yet to confirm the full details

of the attack, a source from the village told *NAN* that the armed men, numbering over 200, invaded the village, wielding weapons.

A resident, Paulina Irimiya, confirmed that the attack occurred around 6.30 a.m. on Tuesday morning.

Mrs Irimiya alleged that the attacks were carried out by armed Fulani men.

Some areas in Kajuru Local Government had received attention recently following a spate of violence that led to the death of many.

Another villager, who simply identified herself as Rachael, said that at least six people were killed by her

count.

She said some herdsmen stormed the village in search of their lost cows, but later, things took another turn when they started shooting people.

"Many houses were burnt, including a church where women were having their fellowship.

"As I am talking to you right now, I have lost my uncle and my grandfather, and I have counted four other bodies," she said.

The National President of Southern Kaduna Peoples Union, Solomon Musa, said the latest attack claimed a whole village.

"What I've been told from several sources is that the whole village has been destroyed," he told *Premium Times* via telephone on Tuesday afternoon.

Mr Musa could not state the casualty figure as information he should have gotten from village heads came from other sources. This, he said, was due to the arrest of heads of villages in the area.

Meanwhile, President Muhammadu Buhari, on Tuesday, met behind closed doors with the state governor, Mallam Nasir el-Rufai, at the Presidential Villa in Abuja.

NAN gathered that the gov-

ernor might have used the opportunity of the meeting to brief the president on the fresh attacks on the communities.

el-Rufai had earlier, via a statement issued by his spokesman, Samuel Aruwan, confirmed the attacks on some communities in Kajuru and Kachia local government areas.

The governor said security agencies were already working to contain the situation.

The statement said Governor el-Rufai condemned the recourse to violence, while calling on all communities to support government's efforts to restore calm in the areas.

"Today, the Kaduna State government was briefed by security agencies about renewed attacks in Kajuru Local Government Area, and in parts of neighbouring Kachia Local Government Area.

"The state government has been assured that security agencies are working assiduously to contain the situation.

"The government is saddened by these attacks, condemns the perpetrators and urges all residents of the area to support the security agencies in their efforts to protect the communities."

NAN reported that the outcome of the meeting between the president and el-Rufai, which lasted less than an hour, was still being awaited as of the time of filing this report.

el-Rufai had, on February 19, told State House correspondents, after briefing an

expanded security meeting presided by President Buhari, that the death toll as a result of the communal clash in Kajuru Local Government Area of the state had risen to 130 as against the previous figure of 66.

Meanwhile, Sokoto State governor, Alhaji Aminu Tambuwal, has commiserated with the People of Rabbah Local Government Area of the state where not less than 16 people were killed on Monday.

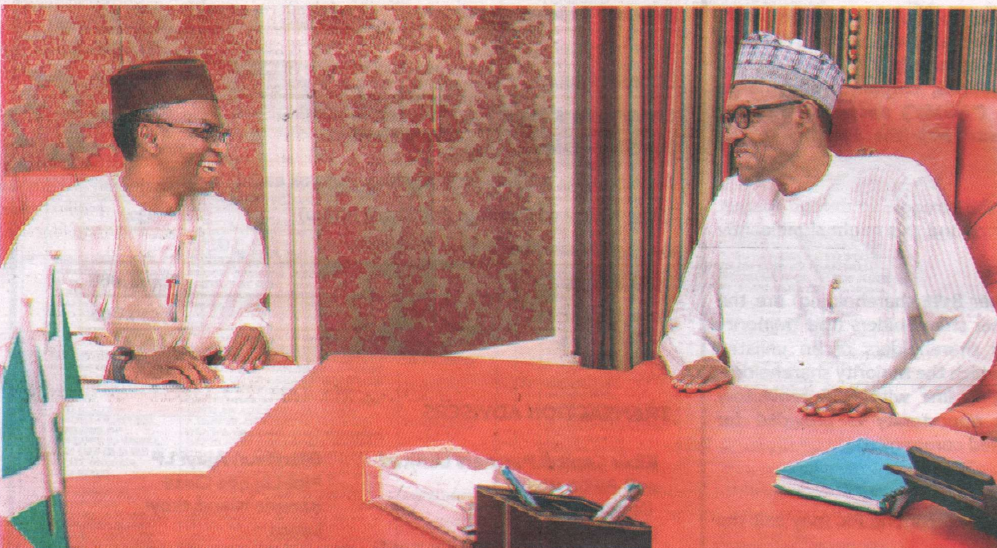
The governor disclosed this while addressing journalists during a state broadcast on Tuesday, saying that the bandits attacked three communities in the local government.

According to him, "I wish to commiserate with the people of Rabbah Local Government Area, and, indeed, the entire people of Sokoto State, on the loss of our brethren to another bandits' attack in Dalijan, Rakkoni and Kalhu communities on Monday night.

"This development, once again, makes it necessary to call on our security personnel to rededicate themselves to their duty of defending the lives and property of our people.

"They should avoid being distracted from their constitutional role by those who seek power at the cost of lives of the people," he explained.

The governor further prayed to Allah to forgive the deceased and grant their families, as well as the people of the state, the fortitude to bear the loss.



President Muhammadu Buhari (right) receiving briefing from the Kaduna State governor, Mallam Nasir el-Rufai, at the State House, on Tuesday.