

# Bandits kill 30 in Sokoto communities

From Muhammad Sabiu and Olakunle Maruf with Agency Report

1 BANDITS have killed no fewer than 37, while several others were injured when they attacked three communities in Tangaza local government area of Sokoto state on Saturday evening.

Nigerian Tribune gathered that the three villages were Raka, Raka Dutse and Filin Gawa communities.

This was disclosed by the immediate past chairman of the local government area, Bashar Kalenjeni, in an interview on Sunday.

He said 18 persons were killed at Raka, while 17 were killed at Filin Gawa and two persons killed at Raka Dutse.

"We wanted to bury them in the night but the bandits came back and dispersed us. We could not bury the deceased as at this morn-

ing (Sunday)," the former council boss said.

Kalenjeni remarked that the offence of these communities was their refusal to pay levies imposed on them.

"The bandits imposed levies on their communities which was meant to take charge with immediate effect and also dictating to residents on what to and not to do.

"But the villagers refused to succumb and because of that, they attacked them, killing 37 persons, while several others sustained various degrees of gunshot injuries and are currently receiving treatment at General Hospital, Gwadabawa.

"There are others who are still unaccounted for.

"Right now, we are waiting for security operatives to lead us to the villages in order to bury the dead ones," he added.

However, spokesman of the Sokoto State Police Command, ASP Ahmad Rufa'i, said he was not aware of the attacks.

2 Similarly, scores were reportedly killed as gunmen suspected to be bandits attacked two local government areas of Sokoto State on Saturday evening.

The Sokoto State police command on Sunday confirmed the attack in the two local government areas in the state.

Spokesman of the command, Ahmad Rufa'i, while speaking with *Nigerian Tribune*, confirmed the attacks but assured that the command is on top of the situation.

He however promised to call back for details of what transpired in the affected local governments. The affected local government areas include Gwadabawa and Tangaza local government areas of the state.

Speaking with *Nigerian Tribune*, a source in Gwadabawa local government, said two villages of Sakamaru and Bilingawa, two of the most populous towns in the area were attacked.

The source said: "Some of the bandits were already in the town unknown to residents of the affected communities before others arrived in the evening to strike.

"The operation started after evening prayer, where they attacked the two villages simultaneously.

"In Bilingawa, not fewer than 18 people were killed during the attack on Saturday evening.

"Sakamaru had scores of people slaughtered amidst gunshots.

"After killing them, they set their corpses and that of their animals on fire by ensuring that most of them were burnt beyond recognition," he said.

Sokoto State police command on Sunday confirmed the death of 30 persons during an attack lunched by group of armed men in Tangaza Local Government Area of the state, *News Agency of Nigeria (NAN)* reported.

A statement issued by ASP Ahmad Rufai, the Acting Spokesman of the command, revealed that the gunmen attacked Raka, Bilingawa, Raka Dutse, Jaba, Dabagi and Tsalewa villages of the LGA on Saturday.

According to Rufai, prior to the attack, some members of a vigilante group had gone to Azam village to warn the Fulani community there.

"However, the vigilante members over reacted and ended up beating some villagers who are predominantly Fulani tribe.

"Consequently the villagers called for assistance, and unfortunately the as-

sistance came from armed men suspected to be bandits on board 20 motorcycles.

"On getting the information that assistance is coming the vigilante members withdrew to their various villages," he said.

The spokesman added that the armed men immediately went after the vigilante members and killed eight people in Raka, seven in Bilingawa, six in Jaba, four in Dabagi, three in Raka Dutse and two in Tsalewa Villages.

He further said that the attackers set two vehicles ablaze and six huts, while one Bajaj motorcycle believed to be that of the armed men was recovered at the scene.

The spokesman also confirmed another attack on Saturday by suspected bandits on some villages in Gwadabawa LGA, eastern part of Sokoto state.