

# New

## Bandits kill army officer, 21 others in Kaduna, says senator

From John Adams, Minna

**AN** army officer and 21 villagers were reportedly massacred in Birnin Gwari town of Kaduna State during a two-day siege, from Thursday to Friday last week.

The senator representing Kaduna Central, Shehu Sani, disclosed this to some journalists in Minna the Niger State capital on Saturday evening on his way back to Kaduna, after rounding off his campaign for re-election in one of the towns in Birnin Gwari, which bordered Niger State.

The senator, who could not follow the notorious road back to Kaduna, had to re-route his journey through Minna with his supporters. He and his supporters had stopped in Minna for refreshments when some journalists caught up with him.

According to Sani, the situation in Birnin Gwari and parts of Niger and Zamfara states "is pathetic; people are being massacred in cold blood daily."

The senator, who said he was briefed by the villagers during his campaign of the area, did not give the identity of the army officer or the command he belonged to before his death.

Although the senator's claim could not be independently confirmed, and there has been no report from either the police or army to confirm any recent killings, our correspondent, however, gathered that the district head of Alawa, in Niger State, which shares a border with Kaduna, was forced to relocate from the community with more than 200 villagers due to the activities of the bandits in the area.

According to Sani, there was a pathetic incident on Thursday, when mourners who went to bury their dead were attacked by the bandits at the graveyard.

He said that some of the mourners were abducted and taken to unknown destination, while others fled, abandoning the dead.

"On several occasions, I have had to pay ransom to secure the release of some of my coordinators, who were kidnapped," Sani said.

He lamented that he could not access Birnin Gwari through Kaduna axis and had to take the longer route through Suleja to Minna to Kagara before reaching the town, and taking the same route back to Kaduna.