

# Bandits kill 51 in Kaduna villages, raze houses

•El-Rufai: I apologise for failure to protect you •Sani blasts northern govts

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**Noah Ebije** and **Sola Ojo**, Kaduna

**No** fewer than 51 corpses have reportedly been recovered following a gruesome attacks in Kaduna State villages in the early hours of Sunday.

The communities affected are Kerawa, Rago, Marina, Zariyawa, Hashimawa, and Unguwar Barau villages, all in Igabi Local Government Area.

Kaduna Police Command confirmed the incident, but did not give casualty figure as at press time.

Public Relations Officer, Muhammad Jalige, said the casualty figure was still unknown. He added that the contingent of the Commissioner of Police was on its way to the affected villages to assess the situation.

“Yes, there was an attack. In fact, as we speak, I am in the entourage of the commissioner of police. We are going to the scene. When we come back, I will get back to you,” he said.

Governor of Kaduna State, Nasir el-Rufai, has apologised to residents of the villages attacked in Igabi and Giwa local government areas of the state over the attacks that reportedly led to the deaths of more than 50 persons.

The governor who visited the scene in company with Commissioner of Police, Ali Janga, said his administration would never negotiate with bandits.

“If not for the security agencies prompt intervention they would have wiped out the entire villages,” el-Rufai was quoted as saying.

“I also came to apologise for failure to protect you fully, we are doing our best to minimise such incidents, you should continue to forgive us.

“But we are doing the best we can and we are hoping that this banditry issue will be addressed because security personnel are on ground to manage the situation.

“In Kaduna, we have vast land, if the security close one area they attack another area.”

“It is our duty to wipe out the attackers and until we send them to their maker, the security agencies are taking the war to the forest and we are eliminating them,” he said.

“The security agencies are doing the best they can, but they find it difficult to get to remote areas in good time due to poor access roads while the natives also find it difficult to get to security personnel due to poor GSM network.

“But I am grateful to the air force, army, police and the DSS for being always prompt otherwise it would have been worse.”

El-Rufai urged the people to continue to be patient and vigilant and support the government and security agencies to win the war against the bandits.

Reacting, former senator who represented Kaduna North Central, Shehu Sani said the north had become a region of endless funerals and perpetual bereavement.

“The mass killings of innocent people in Kerawa village and surroundings villages in Kaduna State by suspected bandits stands unreservedly condemned.

“Northern governors are still playing the ostrich, afraid of confronting the Federal Government and taking independent action to protect their people while the killings and the kidnappings go on.

“Banditry has further impoverished the North and turned it into a cemetery. The lives of ordinary people in the north has become cheap, dispensable, disposable and ordinary.

“The pervasive insecurity in the north is reinforced and sustained by the silence and sycophancy of its elite as much as the inaction of the government.

“Muslims are not much being seen as victims of the killings in the north because many Islamic leaders prefer to massage the image of the government in the face of the killings of their followers while Christian clerics are leading protests in the streets. The north must wake up, buckle up or perish.

“When our people are repeatedly and tragically killed or abducted and we speak out, the only response that comes from the government and its hired agents is that we are ‘politicising the issue of security.’”

Kaduna governor, Nasir El-Rufai, yesterday, visited Kerewa, Ungwan Musa and Zariyawa among others.

He said his government would never negotiate with bandits, and advocated their prompt elimination when they are caught and identified.

Sani lamented that the “cold blooded murder of about 51 persons in the villages” has further deepened the pain of Nigerians and reinforced the imperative and urgency of reinvigorating the security architecture in the country.

“I condemn these gruesome killings in the strongest terms. They are crimes against humanity and must not go unpunished” he said.

He promised to work with the Kaduna State Government, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and humanitarian organizations to ensure that life saving assistance is provided to displaced persons in the affected villages.