

2 vigilantes, scores of bandits killed in Niger gun duel

From John Adams, Minna

SCORES of bandits were yesterday neutralised in Chibani, Shiroro Local Government Area of Niger State after a gun battle with the Joint Security Task Force in the state.

Two members of the vigilante corps were also killed by the bandits who had earlier ambushed them. It was gathered that an unspecified number of cattle were recovered from the bandits, many of whom escaped with bullet injuries.

The gunmen numbering over 50 and fully armed with sophisticated weapons, were said to have stormed a Fulani settlement in the communities and rustled a number of cattle.

A source close to one of the communities, who spoke to Daily Sun on phone, said the Fulani were planning to relocate with their animals from the areas as the dry season began to set in when the gunmen,

acting through informants, stormed the settlement.

It was gathered that over 200 cattle were rustled by the gunmen when the joint security task force stormed the communities, following a distress call, and engaged the gunmen in a fierce gun battle.

The gunmen, after getting wind of the task force trailing them, divided themselves into two groups. While one group was moving ahead with the cattle, the other group was said to have engaged the security agents in a gun battle.

When contacted, the Commissioner for Internal Security and Humanitarian Affairs in the state, Mr. Emmanuel Umar, confirmed the attack by the bandits, but said security forces had been deplored to the area. He, however, declined to comment on the casualties from both ends, but simply said "the operation is ongoing and I am yet to be briefed."