

How bandits killed over 70 in Sokoto

From Rakiya A. Muhammad (Sokoto) & Muideen Olaniyi

Residents of some communities in Sabon Birni Local Government Area of Sokoto state yesterday recounted how bandits killed more than 70 inhabitants.

The attack was launched around 5pm Wednesday but details only reached the state

capital in the early hours of yesterday.

The latest attacks in Sokoto are continuation of relentless onslaught on innocent citizens in the states in parts of the north western parts of Nigeria.

The affected villages include Garki, Dan Aduwa, Kuzari, Katuma and Masawa.

Besides the over 70 people killed, dozens of other sustained

injuries while properties worth millions of naira have been destroyed. Locals said economic activities have been crippled as the attackers whose real motive remains elusive continued to kill and maim.

During the Wednesday siege, locals said the bandits rode on over 150 motorcycles each carrying at least two assailants with some of them carrying

AK47.

"These people did not take anything...They just came and started shooting people," one of the residents, Muhammad Rabi'u Abubakar, lamented.

"Look at the casualty, as I am talking to you, we are seeing dead bodies, more than 74," he said.

Some residents of Sabon Birni, the local government

headquarters said they heard the gunshots from their ends.

The attack on Wednesday followed an earlier one on Sunday, which prompted Governor Aminu Waziri Tambuwal to visit the local government area.

President Muhammadu Buhari yesterday directed security operatives to go to Sokoto and restore order.

Bandits' attacks: 80 bodies recovered in Sokoto communities

- Killings discomfoting, says Tambuwal
- Buhari orders military operations

Umar Abdullahi and
Lawrence Olaye

About 100 people were killed on Wednesday when bandits attacked 10 communities in the Sokoto East Senatorial District of Sabon Birni and Isa Local government areas of Sokoto State.

A reliable local source disclosed that no fewer than 80 bodies had so far been recovered by the villagers.

The source added that scores of other people were reported missing while others sustained various degrees of injury.

Governor Aminui Tambuwal said he received with rude shock

and maximum displeasure the killings of many citizens of Sabon Birni by bandits.

Tambuwal said the bandits, riding on motorcycles and estimated to be in their hundreds, stormed the villages of Garki, Dan Aduwa, Kuzari, Katuma and Masawa, all about three kilometres from the town of Sabon Birnin Gobir, about 6p.m. on Wednesday.

He said: "This development is most discomfoting, considering the fact that myself and the entire security architecture of the state had on Tuesday visited the area and had fruitful discussions with the traditional leaders and other stakeholders on how to nip these unfortunate incidents in the bud.

"Nonetheless, under my watch,

no stone will be left unturned in ensuring that the perpetrators of these dastardly acts are brought to book.

"Rest assured, we are working closely with the Federal Government and the security apparatchiks in the state to find more ways and means to halt this development.

"As we work concertedly to tackle this problem, I commiserate and console, once again, the resilient and peace-loving people of Sabon Birni and environs. These losses of lives and destruction of property are not yours alone but that of the entire people of the state."

The communities affected include Garki, Dan-Aduwa, Kuzari, Katuma, Garin Walkiya, Zangon Malam, Kakari, and Masawa in the two local



Gunmen

government areas.

A native of one of the communities, Malam Usama Abubakar, expressed sadness over the situation.

He said: "It is unfortunate many of us could not visit our villages, even on the festive occasion of Sallah celebration, for fear of falling into the hands of gunmen.

"The Fulani gunmen become so wild every passing day, so much so that they now operate on our major roads, linking Sabon Birni to Sokoto through Goronyo."

Abubakar added that last Saturday, the gunmen blocked the Unguwar-lalle-Sabon Birni Road and killed many innocent citizens.

He said: "In fact, some of us are warned by our communities to stay

away, as our movement is likely being watched by their informants in the villages. Our major worry is that our calls for action from the government seem to be falling on deaf ears."

Meanwhile, President Muhammadu Buhari has condoled with families who lost loved ones in an attack. In a statement by his spokesman, Malam Garba Shehu, the President noted that a major military operation code named "Operation Accord" was launched by the military, targeting the bandits that had been tormenting North-West and North Central states. "This operation will be a full time and sustained military offensive that is intended to deny the bandits any breathing space to reorganize and regroup."