

El-Rufai: 130, Not 66 Killed in Kaduna

February 20, 2019 4:29 am

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Nasir El-Rufai,

Call Kaduna gov to order, Southern, Middle Belt leaders urge FG

Omololu Ogunmade and Shola Oyeyipo in Abuja

Kaduna State Governor, Nasir el-Rufai, yesterday in Abuja said contrary to the earlier figure of 66 Fulani that he said were killed in Kajuru Local Government Area (LGA) of the state on Friday, the figure was actually 130.

El-Rufai has also disclosed that in view of insecurity in the state, he had requested for the deployment of military personnel to flash points during the February 23 and March 9 elections, which was granted by President Muhammadu Buhari.

He also stated that the governors of Borno, Yobe, Adamawa States who were present at the security meeting with the President yesterday also presented security situation reports in their various states.

El-Rufai who said he got to know about the latest figure through an ongoing investigation by the Nigerian Police Force (NPF), had last Friday, disclosed that unknown gunmen killed 66 persons in the area.

However, the Southern and Middle Belt Leaders' Forum (SMBLF), has advised relevant authorities in Nigeria, particularly the federal government, to call the Kaduna governor to order to prevent him from stoking ethnic crisis in his state.

The governor disclosed the latest figure yesterday while briefing State House correspondents after an emergency security meeting called by President Buhari.

According to him, "now, what we are hearing, the last report we got is that over 130 people were killed not even 66."

Aside service chiefs and the acting Inspector-General of Police, four Northern governors, including El-Rufai, attended the meeting. The other three governors were Bindo Jurila (Adamawa), Ibrahim Geidam (Yobe) and Kashim Shettima (Borno).

El-Rufai said to ascertain the authenticity of the figure, Fulani leaders would provide the full list of those killed in the attack to the state government.

According to him, Kaduna State Government would soon release the pictures of the slain victims as well as footages of the burial conducted by members of the Nigeria Army two days after the massacre when their bodies were decomposing.

He said, "Now, what we are hearing, the last report we got is that, over 130 people were killed not even 66. And the Fulani leaders are providing the names of all these people. We have the list and we will release it to the press."

Meanwhile, the Southern and Middle Belt Leaders Forum (SMBLF) has advised relevant authorities in Nigeria, particularly the federal government, to call el-Rufai to order to prevent him from stoking ethnic crisis in his state. In a statement issued yesterday by the National Publicity

Secretary, pan-Yoruba socio-political organisation, Afenifere, Mr. Yinka Odumakin, the Southern and Middle Belt Leaders' Forum (SMBLF) alleged that the governor's actions are capable of igniting crisis.

"The Southern and Middle Belt Leaders Forum has

watched with keen interest recent attempt by the Governor of Kaduna State, Mr. Nasir el-Rufai to foment ethnic crisis in his state on the eve of the botched February 16 presidential election.

"The governor had claimed the reprisal killing of 66 Fulani people in Kajuru LGA of the state with fanfare but has yet to show evidence of deaths as we write this," the statement said

The leaders lamented that "the glee with which the governor went on air on Friday, February 15, 2019 alleging the killings was shocking for the chief executive of a state."

They noted that "the governor went ahead to list the number of villages that were attacked but deliberately excluded Ungwan Barde where 11 people with identified corpses were killed for whatever reasons best known to him.

"The governor claimed that the incident happened on the eve of the election. But the truth by the community concerned is that the incident took place between Sunday, February 10, and Tuesday, February 12, 2019 in Ungwar Barde in Kufana district, where 11 innocent Adara people were killed by suspected herdsmen without any provocation."

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