NAF airstrikes kill 50 bandits in Katsina–Kano axis

From Abdullahi Izma Yamadi, Katsina

At least 50 bandits operating around Musawa, Matazu and Danmusa local government areas of Katsina State, as well as the Tsanyawa axis of Kano State, have been killed in an air operation by the Nigerian Air Force.

The Katsina State Commissioner for Internal Security and Home Affairs, Nasiru Mu'azu Danmusa, confirmed the development in a telephone interview with Daily Trust on Monday morning in Katsina.

He said the military acted on credible intelligence, with support from some repentant bandits, to successfully carry out the operation.

The commissioner said those neutralised were foot soldiers loyal to Baidu, a notorious bandit kingpin who is opposed to the recent peace deal in Danmusa and parts of Katsina State.

He said the bandits were killed around Matazu Local Government Area of Katsina State while returning from what he described as heinous operations in communities around Tsanyawa Local Government Area of Kano State.

Danmusa said that despite the peace accord, the government remains committed to fighting banditry.

Residents expressed confidence that the ongoing offensive against bandits would succeed but urged the government to prioritise

He assured that with the support of former bandits and improved intelligence, several criminal elements have been eliminated, adding that the campaign would be sustained until all enemies of the state are defeated.

"I can assure you that with intelligence sharing and synergy between security personnel in both Kano and Katsina states, coupled with support from communities and repentant bandits, we are recording successful operations across the two states," he said.

Eyewitnesses, who pleaded anonymity for security reasons, confirmed that several armed men were killed by military air strikes while planning attacks on farms near villages between Matazu and Danmusa local government areas.

One eyewitness told Daily Trust that the bandits were burnt beyond recognition but were identified by the dangerous weapons recovered at the scene, including magazines, stolen mobile phones, ammunition, knives and daggers.

Residents expressed confidence that the ongoing offensive against bandits would succeed but urged the government to prioritise the rebuilding of communities destroyed by years of banditry.

They said reconstruction, alongside reintegration, rehabilitation and empowerment of affected communities and former bandits, is crucial to achieving lasting peace