

NAF air strikes target bandits in Niger

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The Nigerian Air Force (NAF) has carried out a successful airstrike against a convoy of armed bandits operating across multiple communities in Mariga Local Council of Niger State.

According to a dependable source and eyewitnesses, the precision strike targeted the bandits as they moved through Yabawa, Bazana, Awallah, Dankolo, and Kumbashi, en route to Kakihum.

The bandits were reportedly transporting a large herd of stolen cattle from Ragada and surrounding villages when NAF fighter jets launched the offensive.

It revealed that the aerial bombardment neutralised several bandits, forcing others to flee in disarray.

A resident of Ragada, who had been previously abducted and taken toward Dankolo, recounted his narrow escape.

“When the jet began bombing, God saved me; that was how I escaped from their hands,” he said.

Eyewitnesses reported that the strike occurred while the bandits were still in transit, not at a fixed hideout.

Villagers observing from a distance described hearing multiple explosions, followed by thick plumes of smoke and sporadic gunfire as the criminals scattered.

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Ground troops stationed in Rijau, Warari, and Gulbin Boka reportedly supported the operation by sealing off escape routes and preventing reprisal attacks on nearby communities, many of which are currently sheltering hundreds of internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Residents praised the mission as the most effective military response yet to the recent surge in violence across Mariga and its environs.

Additional reports indicated that another armed group, also transporting stolen cattle from Magama Local Government Area, was last seen heading toward the Kakihum-Kumbashi axis, prompting renewed calls for sustained aerial and ground surveillance.

“If both the bandits and the stolen cattle perish together, so be it. What we want is peace to return to our land,” one resident stressed.

Intelligence gathered over the past week revealed the presence of at least seven heavily armed groups operating across the Mariga–Rijau–Magama corridor. Observers warned that without the swift intervention of the Air Force, the region stretching from Rijau to Kontagora could have faced renewed attacks.

The success of the operation has significantly bolstered public confidence in the Nigerian Armed Forces and reaffirmed the national commitment to eradicating banditry in the area.

The Mariga airstrike has been commended as one of the most precise and morale-boosting missions in recent times, highlighting the effectiveness and coordination of Nigeria's military apparatus.