

Army strikes Turji's hideouts, kills several bandits

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Bello Turji

Troops have killed scores of bandits in camps linked to notorious kingpin, Bello Turji, during coordinated operations in Zamfara and Sokoto states.

According to reports, the targeted hideouts are located in the Fakai community in Shinkafi and Isa Local Councils of Zamfara and Sokoto states, respectively.

A military source said the success was recorded during a fierce gun battle as part of ongoing operations against banditry in the North-West region.

He disclosed that the operation, led by the 8 Division Strike Force of the Nigerian Army, Sokoto, began in the early hours of March 20, with troops advancing into Turji's camp deep within the Kagara Forest.

However, during the advance operation, two combat support vehicles developed mechanical faults near Maberaya village in Isa Local Council of Sokoto State, prompting a temporary halt to the troops' movement.

The military source revealed that heavily armed bandits from Turji's camp launched an ambush, using high grounds and forested areas for cover, which the troops swiftly responded to with superior firepower, engaging the bandits and eliminating several of them in the process.

“Three soldiers and one personnel of the [Department of State Services \(DSS\)](#) sustained injuries during the skirmish and were promptly evacuated to the 8 Division Military Hospital, Sokoto, for treatment,” the source added.

Meanwhile, authorities have dismissed reports claiming that over 150 bandits drowned in a boat accident in the Sabon Gida area of Sokoto State.

“The news circulating that over 150 bandits drowned in a boat mishap in the Sabon Gida area is a fake report,” the source said.

The [National Inland Waterways Authority \(NIWA\)](#) Area Manager in Sokoto, Mr Bello Bala, also confirmed that the report was fake, adding that the River Sabon Gida area is currently not navigable.

HOWEVER, the Kwara South Security Joint Watch has frowned on the lukewarm attitude of leaders of the senatorial district to the issue of insecurity in the area.

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The body issued a threat alert at the weekend, hours before an attack on the ECWA church at Omugo via Oro-Ago community in Ifelodun council area on Sunday morning.

Eight worshippers were abducted by the armed bandits, including the wife of the head of the church, but three victims were later rescued.

A statement by the Coordinator of the Joint Security Watch, Olaitan Zubairu, yesterday, expressed outrage and frustration that, despite early warnings, leaders failed to act.

MEANWHILE, the Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Lieutenant-General Waidi Shaibu, has reiterated that the welfare of officers and soldiers remains a central pillar of his leadership and command philosophy in addressing insecurity across the country.

He spoke during an Eid-el-Fitr luncheon with troops at the Forward Operating Base (FOB), Epe, Lagos, emphasising that the strength of any Army lies in the well-being, morale, and confidence of its personnel.

The COAS reaffirmed his commitment to improving living conditions, professional development, and family support systems, ensuring every member of the Nigerian Army is treated with dignity and care.

He noted the coincidence of Ramadan and the Christian Lenten season, highlighting the Nigerian Army's unity and shared purpose.

The COAS also honoured gallant officers and soldiers who paid the supreme price, and expressed appreciation to the President and Commander-in-Chief, Bola Tinubu, for his support.

He stressed the importance of collective responsibility in national defence, security, and synergy among security agencies to sustain operational success.

Shaibu commended officers and troops of the 3 Armoured Division Operation Enduring Peace (OPEP) for their unwavering commitment to restoring peace in the country.

Speaking at a luncheon organised for the troops in Jos, the COAS commended the General Officer Commanding (GOC) of 3 Division, Major-General Folusho Oyinlola.