

Eid-el-Kabir: Military assures residents of safety amid B'Haram, ISWAP attack fears

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Nigerian Army

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- Gumi denies links with bandits, rejects allegations of supporting terrorism

The Operation Hadin Kai (OPHK) has warned residents across the North-East of possible attacks by remnant Boko Haram and [ISWAP elements](#) during the Eid-el-Kabir celebrations.

In a statement issued by the Media Information Officer of OPHK, Lt.-Col. Sani Uba, the military said credible intelligence indicated the possibility of isolated attempts by terrorists to target civilians using suicide bombers and improvised explosive devices (IEDs), particularly in densely populated areas.

The Command advised residents to observe security measures before and throughout the festive period.

“Conduct Eid prayers and festivities as close to homes and familiar localities as possible, and avoid large open gatherings where practicable, exercise heightened vigilance in crowded public spaces such as markets, motor parks, banking halls, and prayer grounds.

“Report any suspicious persons, unattended objects, or unusual movements to the nearest military checkpoint, police station, or civil-military liaison point immediately, and cooperate fully with security personnel during patrols and screening operations.

“Avoid unnecessary movement, particularly at night or in areas with limited security presence and refrain from spreading unverified information or rumours capable of causing public panic. Rely only on official information from verified government and security channels,” the statement said.

This came as the Air Component of Operation Fansan Yamma Sector carried out precision air strikes on terrorist hideouts between May 20 and May 23, 2026, killing dozens of terrorists across Rafi and Mariga local government areas of Niger State.

According to the spokesman of the Nigerian Air Force (NAF), Air Commodore Ehimen Ejodame, the operations followed credible intelligence on the movement and gathering of terrorists around Tungan Bako and Kasuwan Daji in Rafi Local Government Area.

He said that on May 20, 2026, the Air Component, working in conjunction with the Nigerian Army Space Command Regiment, executed precision air interdiction strikes that neutralised several terrorists and disrupted their operational build-up in the area.

Ejodame further disclosed that on May 21, 2026, terrorists moving on motorcycles and on foot with rustled cattle from Tungunguna towards Uregi were identified and engaged.

According to him, the operation led to the neutralisation of the terrorists and the destruction of their movement and withdrawal capability.

In another development, renowned Northern Islamic cleric, Ahmad Abubakar Mahmoud Gumi, denied allegations linking him to bandits, insisting that he would never support terrorists to destabilise Nigeria.

Speaking at a press conference in Kaduna yesterday, Gumi said he had no interest in supporting activities capable of destroying the country.

“I have no other country but Nigeria. So, I will never support terrorists to destroy the country,” he said.

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The cleric also said his advocacy for dialogue and rehabilitation of bandits had been deliberately misrepresented by what he described as “ethnic-interest groups” and sensational online content creators.

Meanwhile, [OPHK](#) assured residents that the threats had been anticipated and that troops had already been forward-deployed to critical and vulnerable locations across all sectors of the theatre ahead of tomorrow’s celebrations.

According to the statement, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) assets have been fully activated, while patrols have been intensified.

It added that security forces were working closely with sister agencies, the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), and community vigilance groups to prevent attacks and ensure a peaceful festive period.

“In keeping with its mandate to protect lives and property across the Theatre, the Command wishes to inform the general public that comprehensive security arrangements have been put in place well ahead of the celebrations to ensure a safe and secure environment for all,” the statement added.

Uba called on traditional rulers, religious leaders, media organisations, and community stakeholders to sensitise residents and encourage the timely reporting of credible security information before and during the celebrations.

He said cooperation with security agencies remained vital to the success of ongoing operations.

The OPHK spokesman reassured residents of the North-East that troops remained on standby and fully prepared to respond to any threat.

He added that the Command remained determined to deny terrorists freedom of action and ensure that the Eid-el-Kabir celebrations were held in an atmosphere of peace, safety, and dignity.

“The Theatre Command wishes the entire Muslim community a peaceful and rewarding Eid-el-Kabir celebration,” he said.

Gumi defended his long-standing call for a non-kinetic approach to tackling insecurity, particularly banditry and insurgency in Northern Nigeria.

According to him, Nigeria has relied mainly on military operations since the killing of the Boko Haram leader in 2009, yet insecurity has continued to spread across states such as Katsina, Zamfara, and Niger.

He argued that earlier efforts by some state governments, including Katsina and Zamfara, focused largely on giving money to bandits without addressing the root causes of the crisis.

Gumi advocated a broader rehabilitation framework that would involve engaging armed groups, dislodging them from forests, enrolling their children in schools, and creating pathways for surrender through amnesty arrangements.