

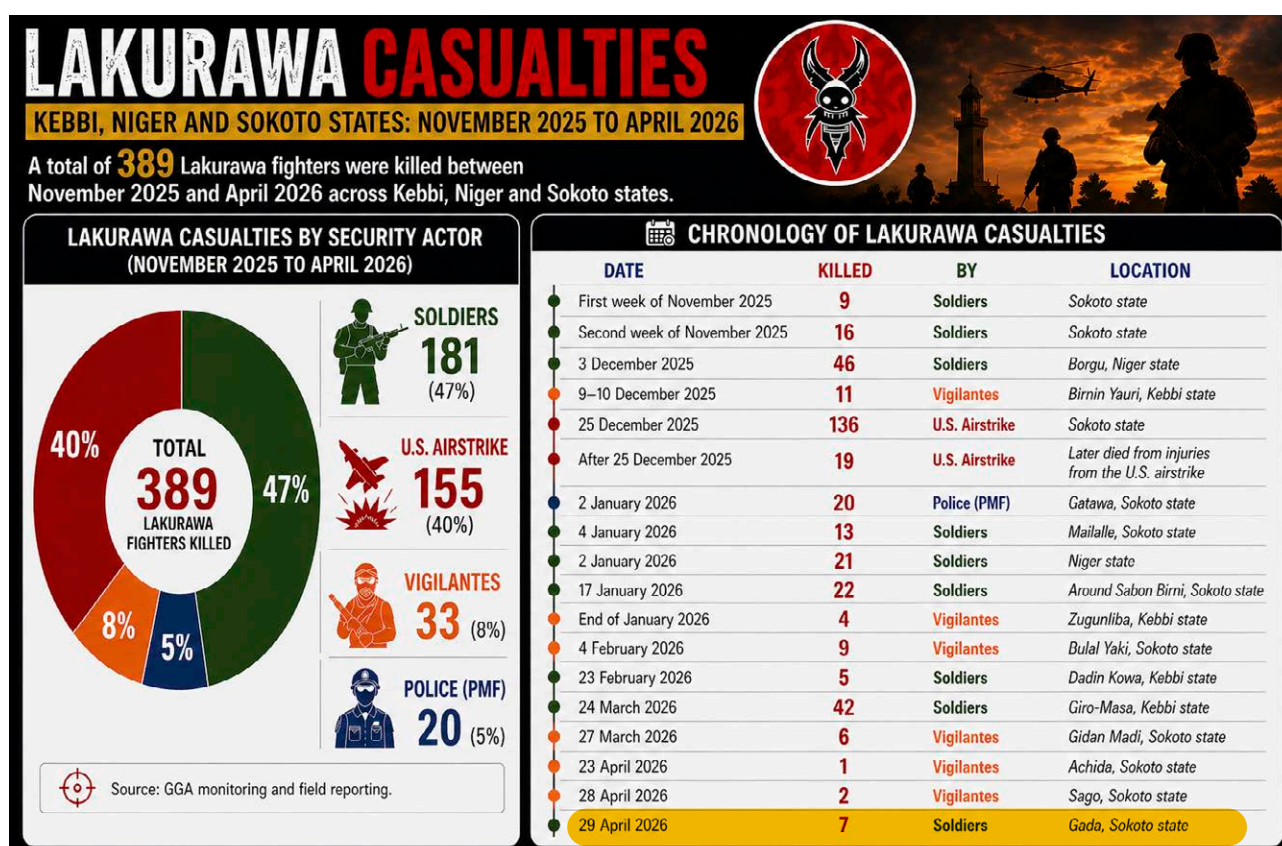


Figure 6: Lakurawa casualties.

## Response against Lakurawa

Lakurawa's control over rural communities is such that communities dare not disobey. The consequence for refusal is attack, most often without response from security forces. In many rural communities, security force presence is typified by sporadic daytime patrols. The military is engaged in internal security operations across all 36 states, with many soldiers deployed without regular rotation because the military is overstretched<sup>21</sup>. Permanent troop deployment in far-flung communities is a challenge.

This does not mean the government is unaware. Village heads send incidence reports to district heads, who report to paramount rulers, who report to state governments. However, the lack of response leaves communities helpless. When Lakurawa demanded payment before Ramadan tafsir, communities notified their paramount rulers, but nothing was done. They paid.

Since the military officially acknowledged Lakurawa's presence in November 2024, responses have been reactionary and inconsistent. The most significant operation was the 2025 Christmas Day airstrike by the United States. Group insiders report that more than 150<sup>22</sup> fighters were lost, with a further 55 killed by Nigerian security forces as the group attempted to cross into Niger Republic.

Lakurawa has suffered additional casualties. On 3 December 2025, 46 fighters were killed during military operations to rescue Papiri school children abducted by JAS. On 24 March 2026, at Giro-Masa in Shanga local government area, Kebbi state, a confrontation with soldiers resulted in 42 fighters killed, including Sibul, who was shot in the right leg and later died from blood loss after all efforts to get medical help failed.

According to GGA monitoring, at least 389 Lakurawa fighters were killed from November 2025 to April 2026,

21 PR Nigeria (2026), Military deployment for internal security operations weakening police capacity – Buratai warns, <https://prnigeria.com/2026/01/12/military-deployment-internal/#:-text=Buratai%20spoke%20on%20Monday%20while,defence%20resources%2C%20he%20said>, Premium Times (2023), Nigerian military is overstretched – Defence Minister, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/581754-nigeria-military-is-overstretched-defence-minister.html?tztc=1>

22 The New Humanitarian (2026), Did the US military strikes in Nigeria hit the right target? <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/analysis/2026/01/12/us-military-strike-nigeria-target>