

Controversy Trails Air Strike On Zamfara Market That Killed Scores



By **Nicholas Dekera** 6 Hours Ago in **Cover Stories, News**



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| Attack killed 100 civilians, must be investigated – Amnesty International | It's a known bandits' hideout – Govt | Many women among 100 killed–Resident

Controversy has continued to trail the bombing of a market in Zamfara State carried out by the Nigerian Air Force (NAF), with conflicting accounts emerging over the circumstances surrounding the incident.

Residents of Tumfa village in Zurmi Local Government Area accused the Nigerian Air Force of killing about 100 people during an airstrike that struck the village market on

Sunday. According to residents, the market was crowded with buyers and sellers when the strike occurred.

A resident, who spoke in Hausa during a telephone interview, said the airstrike came without warning and claimed that many of those killed were women who made up the majority of traders at the market.

“The incident occurred while people were trading at the Tumfa village market, and most of those who lost their lives were women,” the resident said.

He added that several injured victims were evacuated to General Hospitals in Zurmi and Kaura Namoda for treatment, while rescue efforts were still ongoing to determine the actual casualty figure.

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Govt Insists Area Was Bandits' Hideout

However, the Zamfara State Government maintained that the location was a known hideout for armed bandits.

The special adviser on security to the Zamfara State governor, Ahmed Danmanga, said the government was unaware that a market existed in the area.

“The state government was not aware of the market,” Danmanga said. “The area is a hideout for bandits.”

Meanwhile, the chairman of Zurmi Local Government Council and Zamfara State chairman of the Association of Local Governments of Nigeria (ALGON), Hon. Samaila Hussaini Moriki, said investigations were ongoing into the incident.

“The matter at hand is that we are still investigating. Until then, I will call you back,” Moriki said.

Tumfa village has remained one of the major hotspots of banditry and armed attacks in Zamfara State, with frequent clashes between security forces and armed groups operating in the area.

LEADERSHIP reports that this is the second such bombing of a crowded market within one month.

Pattern Of Deadly Airstrikes

On April 11, more than 100 civilians were reportedly killed in a similar airstrike on a weekly market in Jilli, Yobe State. The military claimed it had carried out a successful strike on a bandits' location, but following public outcry, the Air Force subsequently opened an investigation into the incident.

Residents in northern Nigeria have increasingly expressed concern over civilian casualties resulting from military operations targeting bandits and insurgents.

The Nigerian Air Force has, on several occasions, admitted to “accidental” or “mistaken” airstrikes that resulted in civilian casualties between 2017 and 2025. Such incidents were often attributed to wrong coordinates or misidentified targets during counter-insurgency operations.

Among the notable incidents were the January 2025 airstrike in Dangebe village, Maradun Local Government Area of Zamfara State, where 15 people were killed; the December 2024 bombing in Sokoto State that left more than 10 people dead; the January 2024 Nasarawa bombing that reportedly killed about 85 herders; the December 2023 Tudun Biri incident in Kaduna State in which dozens of villagers were killed; the September 2021 strike in Buhari village, Yobe State; and the 2017 bombing of an Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp in Rann, Borno State.

Amnesty International Demands Probe

Meanwhile, Amnesty International on Tuesday claimed that at least 100 civilians were killed in the airstrike and called for an immediate investigation into the incident.

The rights organisation said the strike on the remote Tumfa market in Zurmi district was the second deadly airstrike on a crowded market in northern Nigeria within one month.

According to Amnesty International, dozens of injured persons were receiving treatment in hospitals in Zurmi and nearby Shinkafi, while many of those killed were women and girls.

The Nigerian military had yet to officially respond to requests for comments as of press time, although it has consistently maintained in previous incidents that its air operations are intelligence-driven and targeted strictly at militant positions.

Citing eyewitness accounts, Amnesty International said military aircraft were first seen hovering over the area around midday before returning about two hours later to bomb the crowded market.

Nigeria's military has continued operations against armed bandit groups in the North-West and the 17-year insurgency in the North-East.

Amnesty International condemned the latest strike, describing it as unlawful and alleging that it reflected a growing pattern of disregard for civilian lives.

"This pattern of human rights violation is increasingly becoming the norm, with villagers at the receiving end of atrocities by both armed groups, bandits and the military," the organisation said.