

Military strikes Turji's hideouts, kills scores of bandits



• *'Report of 150 drowned bandits fake'*

Troops of the Nigerian Army have neutralised dozens of armed bandits in the notorious bandit kingpin Bello Turji's camp.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the hideouts are in Fakai community in Shinkafi and Isa Local Government Areas of Zamfara and Sokoto states.

A source in the Nigerian Army, who pleaded for anonymity, told NAN yesterday that the success was recorded during a fierce gun battle as part of the routine operation against banditry in the areas.

According to security sources, the operation was led by the 8 Division Strike Force of the Nigerian Army Sokoto, and it commenced at early hours on March 20, targeting Turji's camp deep inside Kagara Forest.

The source said during the advance operation, two combat support vehicles developed mechanical faults near Maberaya village in Isa local government area of Sokoto, prompting a temporary halt in the troops' movement.

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The source said it was at that moment that heavily armed bandits from Turji's camp launched an ambush, using high grounds and forested areas for cover.

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"However, the troops swiftly responded with superior firepower, engaging the bandits and eliminating several of them in the encounter.

"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.

In a similar vein, the source described the report of 150 bandits capsized in a boat mishap and died in a river in Sokoto as a false report.

"The news circulating that over 150 bandits drowned in a boat mishap in 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 not navigable.