

Troops foil Sokoto abduction bid, govt dismisses Turji threat

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Troops of Operation Fansan Yamma have repelled a bandit attack and neutralised several terrorists in Takatsaba, a border community in Sabon Birni Local Government Area of Sokoto State.

The development comes as the state government reassured residents of its readiness to confront renewed security threats linked to notorious bandit leader Bello Turji.

A credible security source disclosed on Wednesday that the incident occurred on Monday when heavily armed bandits invaded the community in an attempt to abduct residents.

According to the source, troops swiftly responded to the attack and engaged the assailants in a fierce gun battle, forcing them to retreat.

“The troops confronted the bandits with superior firepower, leading to the neutralisation of several of the attackers, while others escaped with gunshot wounds,” the source said.

The prompt military intervention prevented casualties among residents and safeguarded property in the community.

Security operatives also recovered two motorcycles, magazines and assorted ammunition abandoned by the fleeing attackers.

The source, who was not authorised to speak publicly, said proactive security operations had been intensified across vulnerable border and farming communities to curb criminal activities.

He commended the troops for their professionalism and rapid response, describing the operation as a major success that averted what could have resulted in significant loss of lives and property, while urging residents to continue supporting security agencies with timely and credible intelligence.

The latest military success came as the Sokoto State Government moved to calm fears sparked by reports that notorious bandit kingpin Turji had allegedly acquired sophisticated weapons and recruited mercenaries to train members of his criminal network.

Speaking with journalists, the Special Adviser to the Governor on Security Matters, Col Ahmed Usman (retd), said the government was closely monitoring developments and working with security agencies to ensure that criminal elements do not destabilise the state.

“Security is a continuous process, and as a government, we take every intelligence report seriously.

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“We are working closely with the military, police, intelligence agencies and other security formations to ensure that criminal elements do not have the opportunity to threaten the peace and stability of our state,” Usman said.

He noted that Governor Ahmed Aliyu’s administration had continued to prioritise security through sustained logistical and financial support to security agencies, including the provision of operational vehicles, motorcycles, communication equipment, fuel supplies and other resources to enhance their effectiveness.

According to him, the government also invested heavily in intelligence gathering, security operations and community-based security initiatives aimed at tackling banditry and related crimes.

“These efforts have significantly improved the capacity of security personnel to respond swiftly and effectively to security challenges,” he added.

Usman cautioned residents against fear-inducing propaganda circulated by criminal groups, insisting that security forces remained capable of confronting emerging threats.

“While we will never underestimate any threat, we are confident in the capacity and preparedness of our security forces to confront and neutralise criminal elements.

“The sustained operations being carried out by security agencies have continued to put bandits under pressure and limit their ability to operate freely,” he said.

He urged citizens to remain calm, vigilant and law-abiding while providing credible and timely information to security agencies.

“The government of Governor Ahmed Aliyu remains fully committed to providing all necessary support to ensure lasting peace, security and development across Sokoto State,” he added.

Turji, one of the most wanted bandit leaders in the North-West, has been linked to numerous attacks, killings and kidnappings across Sokoto, Zamfara and neighbouring states.

In recent months, troops of Operation Fansan Yamma and other security formations have intensified offensives in forests and border communities believed to serve as bandit hideouts, leading to the elimination of several commanders, the rescue of kidnapped victims and the recovery of weapons.

The latest reports alleging that Turji has acquired advanced weaponry and enlisted mercenaries have heightened anxiety among residents, even as authorities insist that ongoing military operations and enhanced security measures are sufficient to contain the threat.

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