

Lakurawa kills six in Sokoto, military destroys terror cells

January 23, 2026 4:23 am



File photo: Sokoto map

By Animashaun Salman

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Six residents of Baidi village in Tangaza Local Government Area, Sokoto State were killed on Wednesday night when armed bandits believed to belong to the Lakurawa network attacked the community.

Eyewitnesses said the assailants stormed the village around nightfall, shooting indiscriminately and forcing residents to flee.

Communities in Tangaza, Binji, Gudu, and Illela LGAs — as well as border communities in Kebbi State — have suffered repeated assaults from cross-border Lakurawa terrorists for years.

A resident linked the renewed violence in Baidi and Sanyinna to the communities' refusal to comply with directives allegedly issued by the bandits.

He said, “This is not the first time they have attacked our village, killed people and fled,” recalling that the Village Head of Sanyinna was previously killed in a similar attack.

Residents are calling for urgent reinforcement of security personnel to tackle the persistent threat.

Funeral prayers for the victims were held on Thursday, and the bodies have since been buried.

Also in Kogi State, two members of the same family were reportedly abducted in Ihale-Bunu, Kabba/Bunu LGA.

The victims were 100-year-old Chief Samuel Fagbemi and 50-year-old Chief Zacheus Sunday Fagbemi, a member of the local vigilante service.

The abduction occurred on Wednesday around 4:00 p.m., when armed bandits arrived in large numbers on more than 20 motorcycles.

Witnesses said the bandits were heavily armed and moved swiftly, overwhelming residents.

Multiple sources within the community confirmed the two men were taken to an unknown location.

Police had not confirmed the incident as of filing, and efforts to reach ASP Saliu Oyiza, the public relations officer, were unsuccessful.

Residents lamented the absence of security personnel and called for urgent deployment to secure the victims’ release.

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This attack came just two days after the state government launched two 2hp 20 security surveillance drones.

Meanwhile, troops of Operation FANSAN YAMMA, the Joint Task Force North West, intensified coordinated offensives against terrorist groups, recording operational gains between Wednesday and Thursday, 21–22 January.

Military officials said troops from 8 Division’s Garrison Strike Force, working with the Department of State Services, engaged terrorists during a patrol in Gundumi Village, Isa LGA.

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“One fighter was neutralised while others fled with injuries. Six AK-47 rifles and three motorcycles were recovered,” officials said.

In a follow-up mission, troops from 1 Brigade, supported by the JTF Mobile Strike Team, acted on intelligence that injured terrorists were being sheltered in Bingi Forest.

The team destroyed what authorities described as a makeshift medical facility used to treat wounded fighters, further degrading the network’s support chain.

A statement by the Media Information Officer for OPFY, Capt. David Adewusi, said the back-to-back operations are part of sustained efforts to “decisively degrade terrorist networks and restore peace and security across the North West.”

Troops also rescued 62 hostages and neutralised two suspected terrorists across Kebbi and Zamfara states.

According to the Army, Sector 2 of the Joint Task Force ambushed Lakurawa fighters at Kerani Village, near the Augie (Kebbi)–Binji (Sokoto) border corridor.

“Two members of the group were killed during the encounter, while two motorcycles used for long-range movement were seized,” the Army said.

In Zamfara, troops stormed Munhaye Forest, a hideout of bandit kingpin Kachalla Alti, freeing 62 captives. The rescued victims were in “safe custody,” with arrangements underway to reunite them with their families.

Similarly, the Sokoto State Police Command also reported breakthroughs against criminal networks, announcing fresh arrests linked to financial fraud, kidnapping, and extortion in three LGAs.

Commissioner of Police Ahmed Musa said at a press briefing on Thursday:

“You will recall our earlier briefings of November 29 and December 19, 2025. The Command has not relented since then. This latest success demonstrates our unwavering resolve to dismantle the group’s capabilities and disrupt their operational base.”

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Operatives of the Anti-Kidnapping Unit stormed a hideout at Rugar Woro, Wamakko LGA, on 18 January following “credible and actionable intelligence.” Two key suspects — Abdulrazak Salihu (aka Monosa) and Habibu Sahabi (aka Habibi) — were arrested, with items recovered including counterfeit currencies in naira, dollars, and CFA; a POS machine; perfume bottles and fetish materials; horns, a cutlass, charms, and a red scarf. Three additional suspects remain at large.

“These items point to the gang’s involvement in advanced financial fraud and psychological intimidation,” Musa noted. “We are confident that these arrests have crippled a major wing of their logistics network.”

The Anti-Kidnapping Unit also apprehended suspects linked to kidnapping, levy collection, and extortion in Silame and Yabo LGAs. Musa added:

“Our intelligence network is robust, and our operatives are on high alert. To those still at large, I advise you to surrender or face the full consequences of the law. If you see something, say something, and the police will definitely do something.”

Sokoto, like much of the North West, continues to grapple with banditry, extortion, and kidnap-for-ransom activities, particularly in rural areas. Security operations have intensified since late 2025, reflecting a tactical shift toward targeted, intelligence-led raids rather than broad patrol sweeps.