

NAF probes alleged civilian casualties in Niger air raid

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File: Nigerian Air Force fighter jet

By Solomon Odeniyi

The Nigerian Air Force has launched an investigation into reports of civilian casualties following an air operation on Sunday, January 25, 2026, in Kurigi Village, Kontokoro District of Mariga Local Government Area, Niger State.

In a statement on Wednesday, NAF spokesman, Air Commodore Ehimen Ejodame, described the allegations as grave and expressed deep concern for those affected, stressing that the protection of non-combatants remains central to the service's operational conduct.

“The Nigerian Air Force has noted reports alleging civilian casualties following air operations conducted on Sunday, 25 January 2026, in Kurigi Village, Kontokoro District, Mariga Local Government Area of Niger State. The NAF acknowledges the gravity of the reported loss of lives and injuries and conveys its deep concern for all affected, while reaffirming that the protection of non-combatants remains central to its operational conduct,” Ejodame said.

He explained that the Air Force has activated a Civilian Harm Accident and Investigation team to conduct an immediate and comprehensive probe into the incident, guided by the principles of accountability, responsibility, and transparency.

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“Over the past year, the NAF has consistently applied its Civilian Harm Mitigation and Response – Action Plan, embedding civilian protection considerations into all phases of operations while strengthening training, procedures, and safeguards aimed at minimising harm. In line with this commitment, the NAF has activated a Civilian Harm Accident and Investigation team to commence an immediate and comprehensive investigation into the reported incident,” Ejodame said.

He assured Nigerians that the Air Force would take responsibility where necessary and implement corrective measures based on the findings of the investigation.

“The NAF assures Nigerians of its unwavering resolve to take responsibility where required, implement necessary improvements, and safeguard innocent lives, while continuing to defend the nation with professionalism, restraint, and respect for the trust placed in it by the Nigerian people,” Ejodame added.

The Air Force has been conducting sustained operations in parts of Niger State to support ground troops in tackling banditry and other security threats. Over recent years, the military has strengthened civilian protection frameworks, including the Civilian Harm Mitigation and Response – Action Plan, following concerns about civilian casualties during counter-insurgency and internal security operations.

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