

Airstrikes hit Borno terrorists, Army acquires advanced combat drones

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File: Nigerian Air Force fighter jet

By Solomon Odeniyi

The Nigerian Air Force said it had intensified ongoing counter-terrorism operations in the North-East with precision airstrikes targeting terrorist enclaves in Borno State.

The development comes as the Nigerian Army acquired additional protracted TP-2 drones and reconfigured its aviation assets for combat operations, as part of efforts to enhance operational effectiveness against emerging security threats across the country.

In a statement issued on Wednesday by the Director of Public Relations and Information, Air Comdr Ehimen Ejodame, the NAF said the strikes were carried out on May 19, 2026, by the Air Component of Operation Hadin Kai at Bukar Meram in the Southern Tumbuns and Chikide in the Mandara Mountains.

According to him, the operations were based on credible intelligence and confirmed through Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance missions.

The NAF said the airstrikes destroyed terrorist logistics hubs, structures and assembly areas concealed within the enclaves, while several terrorists were also neutralised.

The statement read, “The NAF, through the Air Component of Operation Hadin Kai, intensified ongoing air offensives against terrorist elements in the North-East with precision air strikes conducted on May 19, 2026, at Bukar Meram in the Southern Tumbuns and Chikide in the Mandara Mountains.

“Acting on credible intelligence and confirmatory Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance missions, NAF air assets destroyed terrorist logistics hubs, structures and assembly areas concealed within the enclaves, while also neutralising several terrorists and disrupting planned attacks.”

Speaking on the operations, the Chief of the Air Staff, Sunday Aneke, reaffirmed the Air Force’s commitment to sustaining coordinated joint operations with other security agencies and allied partners to eliminate terrorism across the country.

Aneke said intelligence-driven air operations would continue to target and destroy terrorist hideouts, logistics networks and operational bases wherever they exist.

The Chief of Army Staff, Lt Gen Waidi Shaibu, speaking at the close of the 2026 COAS conference, said the investment in modern combat capabilities was aimed at strengthening surveillance, target acquisition, precision strikes and casualty evacuation during military operations.

At the conference, senior military officers reviewed ongoing operations, training and the country’s evolving security environment.

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Shaibu said, “Our investments in modern capabilities, such as the acquisition of additional protracted TP-2 drones and the configuration of the Nigerian Army aviation for combat purposes, are timely and strategic.

“These force multipliers have significantly enhanced our surveillance, target acquisition, precision strikes and casualty evacuation capabilities,” he said.

The Army chief noted that the changing nature of contemporary security threats required the Nigerian Army to remain proactive, adaptive and innovative in its operations.

He also said the conference featured critical reviews of intelligence, operations, logistics, administration and institutional reforms aimed at transforming the army into a more combat-ready and technologically driven force.

Shuaibu reaffirmed the Nigerian Army’s commitment to prioritising the welfare of officers and soldiers, stressing that improved living conditions and timely welfare packages are critical to enhancing combat

readiness and operational effectiveness.

“As earlier shown in the clip presented by my Chief of Staff, there are several direct intervention projects currently ongoing across the Nigerian Army for a more conducive working and living conditions critical to strengthening the army’s combat readiness.

“These intervention efforts were made with the realisation that a well-motivated soldier operating in a conducive environment will undoubtedly demonstrate higher morale, loyalty and effectiveness.

“The discussion on welfare programmes such as timely payment of entitlements, improved health care services, educational support and enhanced welfare package will significantly contribute to the overall combat effectiveness of our troops.

“We must, therefore, continue to prioritise the well-being of our personnel and their families,” he said.

The Nigerian Army directly purchased its first set of tactical unmanned aerial vehicles in 2022 when it acquired a fleet of American-made Aerosonde Mk 4.7 drones for Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance operations. Operational flights for these systems officially began on October 11, 2022.

Following this, the Army has continued to expand its aerial fleet, including the procurement of 43 Turkish-made Bayraktar TB2 combat drones in December 2024 to tackle insurgency in the Northwest.