

Tragedy in Niger: Air Force strike on terrorists allegedly kills civilians in Shiroro

**Defence Headquarters dismisses claims of civilian casualties*

By Wole Mosadomi

MINNA—A Nigerian Air Force operation targeting armed bandits in Shiroro Local Government Area of Niger State has reportedly resulted in the deaths of several civilians, sparking confusion and panic in the affected communities.

The air strike, which occurred on Sunday, was aimed at neutralising bandits said to be moving in large numbers across communities in Shiroro and Munya local government areas. However, residents said some civilians were caught in the attack.

The number of bandits killed in the operation has not yet been confirmed.

Eyewitnesses said the armed group, estimated at over 500, had been sighted moving through communities after reportedly entering Niger State from neighbouring Zamfara and Birnin Gwari in Kaduna State.

Residents of Kuchi, Chibani, and Zagzaga communities in Munya Local Government Area were said to have fled their homes after noticing the movement of the suspected bandits.

A source in the affected area said the bandits had gathered and spent the night in Kusasu community in Shiroro before advancing towards other villages.

"We gathered that the bandits slept in Kusasu on Saturday and later moved towards Chibani en route to Zagzaga. The Air Force struck while targeting them in Kusasu, but unfortunately, some civilians were also affected," the source said.

The source added that several houses in Kusasu were damaged during the operation, although the exact number of civilian casualties has not been confirmed.

Another resident said the bandits had moved through villages without abducting anyone, though they were suspected to be targeting livestock in the area.

Chairman of Munya Local Government Area, Aminu Najume, confirmed the development, saying the bandits likely entered Niger State through Chikun Local Government Area of Kaduna State. He explained that the attackers came in three

groups through different routes, including Igwu-Suka Chire, Katerma, and Jeso communities.

Najume said, "The bandits, from what we observed, were over 500 in number. Their movement has forced many residents to flee their homes as they have begun rustling cattle and other livestock in large numbers."

Security operatives have since been deployed to the affected communities to restore calm and prevent further attacks.

Meanwhile, the Defence Headquarters (DHQ) has dismissed reports alleging civilian casualties in recent aerial interdiction operations in Shiroro Local Government Area of Niger

State.

In a statement issued on Saturday in Abuja, the DHQ insisted that the strikes were precisely targeted at armed bandits.

The Director of Defence Media Operations, Major General Michael Onoja, said the operations conducted in the early hours of May 10 were based on credible intelligence indicating the convergence of armed bandits at Lukupe Village and other locations within Shiroro LGA.

He explained that the Nigerian Army UAV Command carried out multiple airstrikes between 11:59 p.m. on May 9 and 6:00 a.m. on May 10, targeting identified bandit hideouts

in Katerma, Bokko, Kusasu, and Kuduru villages.

According to him, post-strike intelligence and local sources confirmed that the operations were effective, particularly in Kusasu, Katerma, and Bokko, where the intended targets were neutralised.

"About 70 bandits were neutralised in Kusasu alone, while others were seen gathering the remains of their colleagues for burial," he said. He added that over 200 armed fighters on motorcycles were observed retreating towards Zango, while other groups advanced from Bokko, suggesting attempts to regroup or launch attacks on nearby communities.

Troops foil security breach, nab spy, impostors in Abuja

ABUJA—TROOPS of the Guards Brigade have foiled a potential security breach with the arrest of a suspected spy and four impostors during separate operations in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

This is contained in an operational report made available on Sunday in Abuja.

The Army said the operations were conducted on May 9 by troops of the 176 Guards Battalion and Guards Brigade Garrison at different locations within the nation's capital.

It stated that troops on routine foot patrol around the

Presidential Wing of the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport on Saturday intercepted a suspected spy loitering within a restricted area.

Items recovered from the suspect included a wallet containing two ATM cards, receipts, and passport photographs. The suspect is currently in custody for further investigation.

In a separate operation, troops of the Guards Brigade Garrison arrested four suspected impostors at about 9:00 a.m. the same day at Gwarinpa, along Dantata Estate in the Abuja

Municipal Area Council (AMAC).

The suspects were reportedly dressed in military camouflage at the time of arrest. Items recovered from them include one ballistic helmet, one fragmentation jacket, a dagger, two motorcycles, four mobile phones, and other items.

The suspects are currently in custody as investigations continue.

The Nigerian Army said the arrests form part of ongoing efforts to strengthen security around sensitive locations in the FCT and prevent infiltration by criminal elements.

Missing NYSC member found in Abuja after 4 days

By Kingsley Omonobi

THE FCT Police Command yesterday confirmed that a missing National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) member and lawyer, Ms. Linda Ameh, has been found in Abuja after disappearing for four days.

The Police Public Relations Officer, SP Josephine Adeh, in a statement, said Ameh, who was declared missing on May 6, 2026, reported herself at the Maitama Police Station and provided details of what transpired during her disappearance. "The FCT Police Command wishes to inform the public that Ms. Linda Ameh, the legal practitioner earlier reported missing on 6th May 2026, has been found and has personally reported to the

Maitama Police Station to provide details of the incident," the statement said.

She added that investigations were ongoing to identify and apprehend those responsible for her disappearance, while Ameh is assisting the police with useful information.

The Command also noted that further details, including whether any ransom was paid, could not be immediately confirmed. However, it was gathered that her alleged abductors had earlier contacted her family demanding a N20 million ransom.

Recall that the FCT Police had earlier launched an investigation into the reported disappearance of Ms. Ameh, who was said to have been abducted on Tuesday, May 6,

shortly after closing from work at Blades and Butchers Ltd in Maitama at about 5:40 p.m.

She was reportedly heading home to Life Camp when she became unreachable, with both her phone lines switched off despite repeated attempts by relatives to contact her.

The incident was immediately reported to the Maitama Division of the FCT Police Command and the NYSC authorities. Ameh, who was said to be nearing completion of her NYSC service, including her Community Development Service, had recently resumed work as a Sales Manager.

The kidnappers were said to have contacted her family demanding a ransom of N20 million, raising concerns over her safety and prompting calls for swift action by security agencies.