

Troops kill 89 bandits, recover arms in Zamfara

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Troops on Friday killed 89 bandits near Gidan Jaja village in Zurmi Local Government Area of Zamfara State, Daily Trust gathered yesterday.

The operation, according to reliable sources, was jointly carried out by the 35 Battalion and 17 Brigade of the Nigerian Army, Katsina, Police Special Operatives, and personnel of the Operation Hadarin Daji.

Sources close to the operation told Daily Trust that many motorcycles and firearms were recovered. It came barely a week after the bandits ambushed and killed four soldiers in a forest near Birane village in Zurmi.

Another source told our correspondent that hundreds of rustled cows and dozens of rifles were recovered during the operation.

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A resident of Gidan Jaja told Daily Trust that they noticed movement of troops with heavy weapons and many bodies were seen after the operation.

A statement signed by the Coordinator, Defence Media Operations, Major General John Enenche, also said in Abuja yesterday that troops of Operation Hadarin Daji supported by the 35 Battalion and Quick Response Group of the 17 Brigade of the Nigerian Army, two helicopter gunships of the Nigerian Air Force, and the police attacked and neutralised bandits in Gidan Jaja, Zamfara State on April 25, and recovered arms and ammunition from them.

He said 89 bandits were killed and many of them escaped with gunshot wounds. Enenche added that the troops rescued five kidnap victims and recovered 322 rustled cows, 77 motorcycles and nine cell phones. He said a formal handover of the kidnapped victims and rustled cows would be carried out after due process.

The Secretary to the Katsina State Government, Mustapha Muhammad Inuwa, said yesterday that many bandits were killed as troops rescued kidnap victims in a joint military operation along the Katsina/Zamfara border forest on Friday night.

He said in a statement through his Director of Press, Abdullahi Yar'adua, while receiving the rescued victims that the operation was carried out by ground forces of the 17th Brigade and the Air Force from Katsina and Zamfara axis.

He said the operation led to the destruction of the bandits' camps and inflicted several casualties on them. Some of the bandits he said fled and abandoned their victims who ran to the soldiers.

While commending the troops for the gallant operation, Inuwa urged them to sustain the tempo. Those rescued are Amadu Rufa'i, 45 years; Habibu Yakubu, 25 years both of Mazanya village in Jibia LGA of Katsina State; Hauwa'u Lawali, 13 years; Khadija Rabe, 13 years and Sumayya Rabe, 10 years, all of Karamne village in Madarumfa region of Niger Republic.

Narrating their ordeals, Rufai said they were kidnapped when working on their farms while the girls said they were hawking onions in Gurbi, a neighbouring town in Zamfara State when the bandits seized them.

He said they spent five days in captivity, adding that the bandits had started demanding for N10 million ransom from his family when the military struck. According to him, the operation caused serious damages on the bandits and their camps as they saw many corpses on their way out of the forest.