

# Terrorists attack military base in Sokoto, kill 15 personnel

From Abubakar Auwal  
(Sokoto) & John Chuks Azu

**B**andits have attacked a joint military base codenamed "Burkusuma Camp" located in Sabon Birni Local Government Area of Sokoto State, killing military and paramilitary officers, *Daily Trust* learned at the weekend.

Our reporter learnt that the base was located at Dama village.

The bandits also attacked Gatawa and other villages around the area.

The attack was said to have taken place in the early hours of Friday but the information did not filter in until yesterday as the area is affected by telecommunication shutdown currently in force in Zamfara State and parts of Sokoto and Katsina.

A member of the Sokoto State House of Assembly, Aminu AlMustapha Gobir, confirmed the attack saying 12 security personnel were killed in action.

Also, the Sokoto State Commissioner for Carriers and Security Matters, Colonel Garba Moyi (rtd) confirmed the attack to *Daily Trust* but said he was not sure of the casualty figures.

*Daily Trust* gathered that the attacks on the Sokoto communities were carried out by bandits from the combined teams of two Zamfara bandits' kingpins, Halilu Sububu and Kachalla Turji.

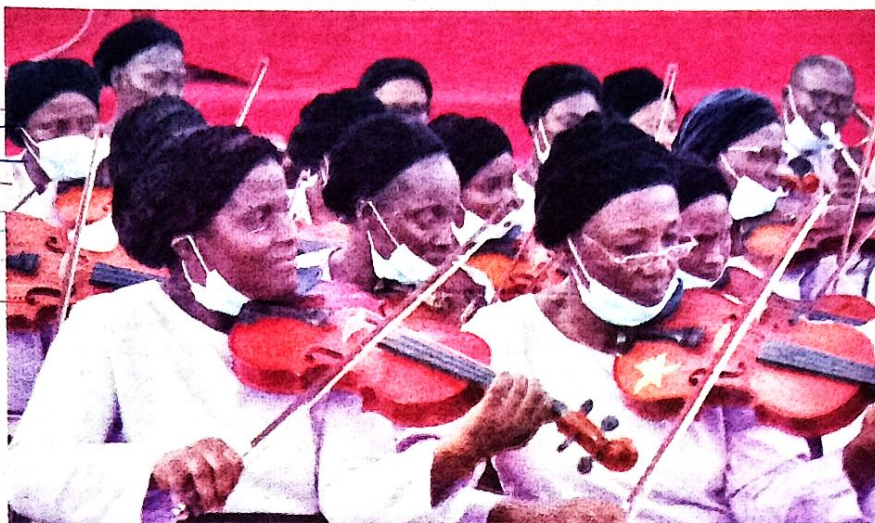
"The bandits came in large number, surrounded the camp and started firing from every angle," a former chairman of Sabon Birni Local Government, Engineer Idris Muhammad Gobir (aka Danchadi) told our reporter, citing eyewitnesses from the area.

It was learnt that nine soldiers, three mobile policemen and three personnel of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) lost their lives in the attack. Gobir said many security operatives in the camp were still missing.

*Daily Trust* last night gathered from a reliable security source in Abuja that nine soldiers fleeing the bandits' assault were rescued by Nigerian troops at Basira, a border village under Gidan Roudmji district of Niger Republic.

The marauders also burnt down two patrol vehicles and carted away another one, which was used to convey food items stolen from the villagers, *Daily Trust* gathered.

Gobir said they received a report about the attack from a resident of the area who was using the Nigerian network.



■ Deeper Life Christian Life Ministry's orchestra performing at the ongoing 'Divine Solution For All Global Crusade' organised by Pastor William Kumuyi, at the Papal Ground, Kubwa in Abuja on Saturday

Photo: NAN

However, a prominent traditional ruler in the area confirmed that some vehicles were sent to evacuate the corpses of the fallen heroes.

"And over 10 trucks loaded with well-armed soldiers are currently in the forest trailing the bandits.

A personnel of the NSCDC who sought for anonymity confirmed to our reporter that three of their personnel were among the casualties.

"As I am talking to you, we are at the morgue to claim and recover their corpses for burial," he said.

It was learnt that the bandits also attacked Katsira village where they shot four persons.

Two of the victims were said to have died instantly while the remaining two were receiving treatment at an undisclosed hospital.

The bandits were also said to have whisked away three persons from the village.

The spokesman for the 8 Division of the Nigerian Army, Major Yahaya Ngulde could not be reached for comment as of the time of filing this report.

Similarly, the Police Public Relation Officer, ASP Sanusi Abubakar said he was not aware of the attack.

When contacted, the Director of Defence Information, Maj.-Gen. Benjamin Sawyer told one of our correspondents that he would get back after confirmation of the incident.

"You have already reported it quoting from your source. I will have to confirm your publication," he said.

He was yet to get back to as at when filing this report.

**Bandits use Nigerian network to coordinate attacks - Lawmaker**

*Daily Trust* learnt that the bandits were now using Nigerian network to communicate within themselves and coordinate their attacks.

Confirming this, a member representing Sabon Birni North constituency, Aminu Almustapha Gobir, said he had received a message from one of the bandits using the Nigerian network service.

"The bandit was threatening to lead his gang to attack me and my community," the legislator said.

"It is true that they attacked a military base at Dama and killed about 12 of them while many were still missing.

"This is why I am faulting the government for shutting GSM network in the eastern part of the state without a serious military operation taking place there.

"The bandits are now using Nigerian network to communicate within themselves and perpetrate their heinous activities in the area.

"I expected our governor to provide Divisional Police Officers and the military deployed to Sokoto East with Thuraya phone, which could enable them to communicate within themselves and with their superior officers if they need help since there is no GSM network.

"This is what the governor of Zamfara did and is paying positively," he said.

The commissioner for carriers

and security said it could be possible for the bandits to use Nigerian mobile lines because of our proximity with the Niger Republic.

**Bandits regrouping in Isa forest, use camels to attack communities - locals**

Fleeing bandits from the neighbouring Zamfara State are now regrouping in Isa forest on the invitation of bandit notorious leader in the area, Turji, locals confirmed.

One of the locals who spoke on condition of anonymity said that there are currently over 20 groups of bandits in the area and they all came on camels because they could not fuel their motorcycles due to the current ban on selling petrol in Jerry cans.

The source added that the bandits were using the same camels to attack their communities and kidnap people.

Retired Colonel Moyi said there was no evidence that bandits were regrouping in the area.

**District head swear with Qur'an over alleged involvement in banditry**

To clear himself from allegations of connivance with bandits in the area, the District Head of Isa, Alhaji Nasir Ahmad has sworn with the Holy Qur'an that he was not aiding banditry.

The palace of the district head and the residence of Moyi were attacked last Monday by some angry mob who accused them of shielding bandits.

The traditional ruler stood up at the Juma'at mosque shortly before the congregational prayer with a copy of the Holy Qur'an hanging on his shoulder and swore that he was not in any way aiding banditry in the area.

"If I have ever facilitated any attack on my community or informing bandits about military movement or any subject in my domain, may God not allow me to witness another week," he affirmed.

In a video clip which has gone viral on social media platforms, the Sarkin Gobir Isa further said that he is more pained about the attack on his community than anybody in the area which elicited a chanting of "Allahu Akbar" and "May God protect you" among the worshippers.

**Situation worsened by rivalry among security agencies - Experts**

Experts have identified a lack of synergy among the various security agencies as a major factor responsible for insecurity in Nigeria. The experts made the comments in a Zoom meeting organised by the Nigerian Diaspora Network (NDN), US chapter on Saturday night.

Speaking on the matter, a retired army officer, Col. Nelson Hambolu noted that the whittling down of the Nigerian Police Force and duplication of its functions by other agencies had weakened the force.

"There is rivalry and at the end of the day, it is about money," he said.

He advocated a return to the grassroots to address the challenge, maintaining that "We cannot talk about banditry without talking about unemployment and poverty."

In his presentation, Prof. Albert Ayeni described the actions of bandits as terrorism and warned the government to act before the infiltrating terrorists unleash more attacks that would make "What happened in Afghanistan would be a child's play."

He called on the legislature to find a way outside the efforts being made by the executive to address the ugly trend.

On his part, the President of the Nigerian Diaspora Organisation (NIDO), Kareem Bello identified "political system failure" as the major problem confronting Nigeria and which has translated to the high level of poverty and insecurity.