

6 feared dead as residents flee Katsina over soldiers' withdrawal

From Tijjani Ibrahim, Katsina

Six people, mainly children, were reported dead as residents of Shimfida, a community in Jibia Local Government Area of Katsina State, were fleeing the area as a result of what they called "unannounced and sudden withdrawal of military personnel" from the area.

This ugly development has

resulted in massive relocation of the residents due to fear of imminent attacks by bandits.

Residents told *Daily Trust* that on Wednesday night a number of military vehicles drove into the area and packed away all the military personnel from their duty post.

Shimfida is on the fringes of Dumburum forest where a lot of bandits' kingpins operating in both Zamfara and Katsina

States are said to be hibernating.

"That military post was here for more than seven years because Shimfida was one of the towns earlier attacked at the beginning of the present day banditry some seven years ago.

"They (military) should have given us at least five days' notice for us to vacate the place, but unfortunately they suddenly came and packed their people

away leaving us at the peril of bandits attack.

"As we speak now, men and women, old people and children are all running out of the place and already six dead bodies of children are found along the way," he said.

Another resident said it became very urgent and necessary for them to migrate because the bandits were angry with Shimfida residents due

to the presence of the military personnel.

Attempt to get a reaction and possible reason for the withdrawal from the army brigade in Katsina proved abortive.

On his part, the police spokesman in Katsina, SP Gambo Isah, said, "If the military have moved away their personnel, it is for them to speak on the reason, not the police."

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