

Scores of bandits killed as Air Force bombs Kaduna forests

•Police arrest foreigner who sold 450 rifles to bandits

■ From AbdulGafar Alabelewe, ■
Kaduna

"Normal human activities and free flow of traffic were observed along the highway and rail line. All locations scanned were reported calm with no threats observed.

"Additionally, strike aircraft carried out operations over Jan Birni, Birnin Gwari Local Government Area, which was observed to be active with bandits.

"The targets were attacked by the aircraft and it was subsequently confirmed that some bandits were indeed taken out and the camp set ablaze and destroyed.

"A second mission was flown over another identified camp in the area, which was also attacked, set ablaze and completely destroyed by two strike aircraft.

"Thereafter, a show-of-force was carried out by the aircraft over the Birnin Gwari general area, Kaduna metropolis and Zaria. Normal human activities were observed along the expressways and rail lines.

"The operations continued as aircraft conducted armed reconnaissance and show-of-force over Birnin

Gwari, Kaduna metropolis and Zaria. Free flow of traffic was similarly observed along the expressways and rail line.

"Normal activities were reported within the metropolis as citizens observed the Eid-el-Fitr celebrations without incident.

"Afterwards, a show-of-force was conducted over Gwagwada, Gadani, Chikun, Kusasu, Iburu, Zamba, Shiroro, Kuta, Kwatayi and Erena, spanning Chikun, Kachia and Kajuru LGAs. All locations covered were reported calm with no threats observed.

"These air operations, which include air interdiction, armed reconnaissance and patrols, are set to be sustained over the coming days over Kaduna metropolis and other areas of interest in the state.

"Major highways will also be covered, including the Kaduna-Birnin Gwari, Kaduna-Abuja, Kaduna-Zaria, Kaduna-Kachia and Kaduna-Afaka roads.

"Receiving the feedback, Governor Nasir El-Rufai commended the crews for the successful missions and thanked them for their

proactive operations," Aruwan said.

Police arrest foreigner who sold over 450 rifles, four other suspects in Zamfara

The police in Zamfara State yesterday paraded five suspects allegedly involved in banditry, kidnapping, cattle rustling and illegal possession of firearms in Zamfara State.

The suspects were paraded by the Police Public Relations Officer in Zamfara State, Shehu Mohammed, at the police headquarters in Gusau, the state capital.

Among them was a Nigerian citizen, Shehu Ali Kachalla, who confessed that he had been in gunrunning business for more than three years.

The foreigner revealed that he had sold no fewer than 450 rifles to different criminal gangs across the Northwest region.

Abubakar Ali, another kidnap suspect from Niger State, said he was operating within Kagarko and Chikun Local Government Areas of Kaduna State.

He also confessed that he

had been in the criminal business for three years and had killed five of his victims who could not afford to pay ransom to regain freedom from captivity.

According to the suspect, their leader pays them between N600,000 and N700,000 in any abduction that attracts N20 million ransom and above.

Shehu Mohammed explained that the arrest of the suspects was a result of the collaboration between the police and the state leadership of the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN).

Mohammed stated that the command would continue to work with any group or persons willing to work for the peace of Zamfara and the Northwest region.

He assured the people of Zamfara that the command was working hard to ensure the state was free from all criminal activities.

Those arrested were said to have been terrorising various communities in Zamfara, Kaduna and Katsina states in the Northwest and Niger State in the North-central part of the country.

Items recovered from the

suspects included four AK-49 rifles, nine magazines, 960 live ammunition, and assorted charms.

The suspects were arrested through the efforts of the Federal Intelligence Investigation Bureau and Special Tactical Squad deployed by the Inspector General of Police to rid Zamfara and the Northwest region of crime.

They were alleged to have kidnapped the younger brother of one Dr Dauda Lawal and confessed that they collected N20 million ransom as well as received N10 million ransom for the abduction of the daughter of one Engr Yahaya Maradun.

The Commissioner for Security and Home Affairs in Zamfara State, Abubakar Dauran, also witnessed the parade of the suspects at the Police Headquarters.

He promised that the state government would not relent in its continuous effort to bring a lasting end to criminality in Zamfara State.

Dauran also appealed to the residents to join hands with government and security agencies in bringing down the activities of criminal elements making life unbearable for innocent citizens.

THE air component of Operation Thunder Strike has conducted a series of aerial missions across several locations in Kaduna State, killing scores of bandits and destroying their camp in Birnin-Gwari.

This was reported in an operational feedback from the Nigerian Air Force (NAF) to the Kaduna State Government.

The Kaduna State Commissioner for Internal Security and Home Affairs, Samuel Aruwan, who disclosed this in a statement yesterday, said that armed reconnaissance was conducted over Erena, Kusasu, Kuduru, Kutefe, Kusherki and Shiroro in neighbouring Niger State as well as Chikun and its environs in Chikun Local Government Area.

According to the commissioner, "bandits were seen fleeing Kaduna State part of Kusasu in Chikun LGA on motorcycles. They were trailed by the crew and subsequently neutralised.

Following this, armed reconnaissance was conducted along the Kaduna-Abuja Expressway, Olam Farms, Rugu, Akilbu, Polewire, Rijana, Katari, Jere and adjoining settlements.