

Air Force 'kills' 23 villagers, worshippers in Kaduna, alleges expert



A security expert, Bulama Burkati has accused the Nigerian Air Force of killing 23 innocent villagers, including women and children, during its Monday's onslaught on supposed terrorists' enclave in Kidandan village, **Kaduna State**.

Burkati took to his verified X account to call out the military service for yet another "mistaken" airstrike which targeted a bandits' base.

According to Burkati, locals claimed the airstrikes, which the NAF reported killed scores of terrorists; hit worshippers in a mosque and people in a nearby market.

He wrote: "A Nigerian Air Force bombing reportedly killed 23 innocent villagers, including women and children, in Kidandan village, Kaduna State, yesterday.

"While the NAF say it targeted a bandit base and killed scores of terrorists, villagers claim that the strike hit worshippers in a mosque and people in a nearby market, killing civilians going about their daily lives. "Disfigured bodies of the victims were buried in the village yesterday according to Islamic rites.

"This appears to be yet another 'mistaken' airstrike by the NAF. There have been over a dozen such incidents where hundreds of civilians were mistakenly killed, thought to be terrorists. "The most recent occurred on December 3, 2023, when a NAF bombing in Tudun Biri, also in Kaduna State, killed at least 85 people celebrating the Prophet Muhammad's (SAW) birthday. "The Nigerian Army later admitted to illegally killing civilians in this incident and court-martialed two personnel suspected to be culpable."

Also, Usman Zannah wondered how many more innocent lives would be sacrificed under the guise of mistaken airstrikes.

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“How many more innocent lives will be sacrificed under the guise of “mistaken” airstrikes? This is reckless and inhumane. The NAF must be brought to account for these senseless killings,” he said.

Efforts to get the reaction of the Deputy Director, Public Relations and Information (DDOPRI), Group Captain Kabiru Ali, were unsuccessful as he didn’t answer calls to his mobile number.

However, Ali in a statement yesterday, denied allegations that airstrikes killed civilians at Giwa Local Government Area of Kaduna State, noting that they were executed based on credible intelligence and confirmatory surveillance footage.

“The airstrike on the location was based on credible intelligence from numerous reliable sources, as well as confirmatory surveillance of the target area before the strike.

“The said location has been notorious as a terrorist enclave for over two years and the successful airstrike would no doubt go a long way in minimizing banditry, kidnapping and similar attacks on innocent civilians in Kaduna State and environs.

“Nevertheless, the NAF is not taking these allegations lightly, as its focus is to always achieve the desired operational objective without collateral damage.

“Accordingly, a thorough investigation is currently ongoing to ascertain the facts with a view to keeping the populace informed in due course,” he said.