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•The rescued victims in Lokoja...yesterday

Army crushes terror cells, 25 ISWAP families rescued

THREE notorious terrorists have been killed, 17 arrested and 25 family members rescued by troops of the Nigerian Army across operational theatres, the service said yesterday.

Also, in another daring rescue, troops of 12 Brigade Nigerian Army, Lokoja, in collaboration with other security agencies, have rescued six kidnapped victims in Obajana, Kogi State.

The operation, which was conducted during the early hours of yesterday, saw the successful rescue of the victims without any casualty.

Acting Director of Army Public Relations (DAPR), Lt-Col. Onyinyechi Anele, in a statement yesterday said the Borno State operations were carried out between August 11 and 13, by troops of 202 Battalion in Bama Local Government Area and that 25 family members of ISWAP/JAS fighters, comprising 12 adult females and 13 children, surrendered from Zalmari, Gazuwa, and Alafa villages.

The surrendered persons are undergoing profiling by the 21 Special Armoured Brigade to de-

•Six kidnapped victims saved in Kogi

By Precious Igbonwelundu

termine their level of involvement in insurgent activities," she said.

Anele said troops of 233 Battalion on the same day, while working alongside members of the Civilian Joint Task Force, laid an ambush on the Sassawa-Kaburu axis in Damaturu Local Government Area. The encounter, she said, led to the death of a suspected terrorist and recovery of an AK-47 rifle.

"In Zamfara State, troops of 1 Brigade Combat Team 5 repelled an attempted attack on Forward Operating Base (FOB) Galadi in Shinkafi Local Government Area, neutralising one terrorist and confiscating a mobile phone.

"On August 12, acting on intelligence provided by a rescued kidnap victim, troops stormed Gremasa Mountain in Shanga Local Government Area, Kebbi State, arresting eight suspected kidnappers. The same day, Sector 4 of Operation Safe Haven arrested five suspected pipeline vandals at Kassa Village in Barkin Ladi Local Government Area, Plateau State.

"Government-owned pipes were recovered, and the suspects were handed over to the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps for prosecution," she added.

According to the army, troops of Sector 3 FOB under Operation Whirl Stroke on August 12, arrested two suspected kidnap collaborators in Taraba State, adding that POS machines, ATM cards, and cash were recovered from them, suggesting a link to ransom collection operations.

"On August 13, troops of 34 Artillery Brigade raided an IPOB/ESN camp at Ndeji Community, a border area linking Anambra, Abia, and Imo states. One armed criminal was neutralised, while troops recovered a pistol with ammunition, cartridges, radios, improvised explosive device components, and mobile phones. Two planted IEDs were later destroyed by the Army's Explosive Ordnance Disposal team," she said.

The sustained operations, Anele said, demonstrated the army's determination to protect lives and property, as well as guarantee the

safety of farmers, in line with the federal government's efforts to boost agricultural productivity and food security.

"The Nigerian Army will continue to maintain relentless pressure on terrorists and criminal elements until peace and stability are fully restored across the country," she added.

Addressing reporters yesterday in Obajana, Brig.-Gen. Kasim Sidi, Commander 12 Brigade Nigerian Army and Force Commander Operation Accord III, said the operation was made possible through intelligent reporting and gathering.

Sidi, represented by the Commanding Officer 126 Battalion, Lt Col. Francis Nwoffiah, said the troops, in collaboration with other security agencies, conducted the operations. The commander said the team was able to track the kidnappers to a location in the forest, where they were keeping the victims.

He said the kidnappers fled with injuries after encountering superior firepower from the troops, abandoning their victims and some of their belongings, including ammunition.

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