

Air Force kills fleeing bandits in Zamfara forests

THE Nigerian Air Force (NAF) says the Air Task Force (ATF) of 'Operation Diran Mikiya' has successfully killed several bandits at Bayan Ruwa and Rugu forest in the eastern part of Zamfara State.

NAF Director of Public Relations and Information, Air Commodore Ibikunle Daramola, disclosed this in a statement in Abuja on Tuesday.

"The attack on Bayan Ruwa was executed following an encounter with a notorious group of bandits by ground forces whilst conducting clearance operations on August 25," Daramola said.

He said the troops called for close air support and the ATF dispatched a ground attack aircraft as well as an attack helicopter to the location.

He said the aircraft supported the ground forces of

Sector 3 to inflict maximum damage on the criminal elements.

The director also said that on August 26, an attack helicopter on armed reconnaissance around same location sighted makeshift structures within a forested area suspected to be a new hideout being developed by the bandits that survived the attack of the previous day.

He said the helicopter, subsequently engaged the

location and some of the bandits, who were seen attempting to flee the location were mopped up by subsequent follow-on attacks.

Daramola said the ATF would continue to dominate the area through armed reconnaissance and air interdiction missions to completely decimate the bandits in order to ensure a return to normalcy to Zamfara and other states in the North-West.

He advised all persons involved in banditry in the area to renounce violence, surrender to security agencies and hand over their weapons.

"Similarly, armed reconnaissance missions conducted on August 26 and 27 revealed the presence of some armed bandits at a settlement east of Hayin Alhaji as well as some warehouse-like structures deep inside Rugu Forest that

were being used as hideouts by the bandits.

"Many armed bandits and a considerable number of rustled cattle were seen around one of the makeshift warehouses.

"Accordingly, the warehouses and the criminals operating there were attacked by the combat helicopters leading to the destruction of the makeshift buildings and neutralisation of several bandits," he said.