

Onslaught against bandits gaining momentum in Zamfara

THE renewed onslaught against armed bandits in Zamfara State by the military under Operation Hadarin Daji (OPHD) is gaining momentum and has disorganised the hoodlums.

The **News Agency of Nigeria (NAN)** reported that hoodlums had been giving residents of the state sleepless nights for about a decade before the Bello Matawalle-led administration initiated dialogue that ushered in peace.

The bandits, however, started a steady and gradual return, with killing of innocent citizens, kidnapping and rustling of animals, compelling the state government to partner the military to resume the fight against them.

NAN gathered that troops of the OPHD had, in the last one week, killed about 40 bandits across villages in the two local government areas of Bungudu and Maru in the state.

The troops, while using air power from fighter jets and helicopters of the Nige-

rian Air Force component, cleared large parts of Koli, Tungar-Mata, Dadinkowa and Jankura villages in Bagega District of Anka Local Government Area as well as in Nasarawa area of Gusau Local Government.

A source close to the military operations confirmed to **NAN** that about 1,000 cows and over 500 sheep were intercepted at one location alone when the bandits tried to use the thickness of Buzaye forest to cross to Zaria in Kaduna State.

They were, however, said to have ran away on sighting the troops.

The source, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, also said many kidnap victims, including the recently kidnapped village head of Wuya in Gummi Local Government, were rescued.

The source also said several weapons, including AK-47, G3 rifles, unspecified number of ammunition and money as well as some motorcycles and drugs were abandoned by the fleeing criminals.