

# Over 50 bandits killed in Taraba —Police

NO fewer than 50 suspected bandits terrorising communities across the Bali Local Government Area of Taraba State have been neutralized in what is regarded as a breakthrough in the fight against banditry.

The spokesman of the Taraba State police command, Abdullahi Usman, told Channels Television on Thursday that the bandits were killed by police operatives in collaboration with other security agencies.

He said the coordinated operation followed an outcry by locals, which led to the ambush and killing of the bandits.

"Taraba State police com-

mand received information that some unknown gunmen suspected to be kidnappers in their hundreds invaded Tonti village under Maihula District Bali LGA Taraba State.

"The bandits invaded the village around 5:30hrs during the time that the Muslim faithful were saying their morning prayers, and started shooting sporadically," he told Channels Television.

He said on receipt of the information, the Commissioner of Police in the state, Joseph Eribo, ordered the deployment of a tactical team from Bali Division to the area in collaboration with the army, vigi-

lantes and hunters.

"On arriving at the village, the bandits engaged the joint team in a gun duel. In the process, many of the bandits were subdued and neutralised due to the firepower of the operatives and others escaped with various degrees of gunshot.

"Investigation revealed that over 50 of the bandits were neutralised."

He added that a manhunt has been launched in the area to arrest the fleeing bandits.

However, 12 locals were shot to death by the bandits before the arrival of the security personnel, the police spokesman added.