

NAF plane killed 25 worshippers in Kaduna community, villagers allege

No mosque there, we killed terrorists — Air Force

Muhammad Sabiu | Kaduna

THE Jika da Kolo community in Yadin Kidandan in Giwa local government area of Kaduna State have alleged that a Nigerian Airforce (NAF) plane fighting terrorists erroneously bombed the community and killed over 25 people at the weekend.

NAF, however, disagreed with the villagers, insisting that following credible intelligence indicating a huge presence of terrorists and their weapons cache in the Yadi forest.

The villagers alleged that the victims included 23 worshippers at a mosque and others at a market in the area, who were erroneously killed during the operation, contrary to claims by the Air Force authority that scores of terrorists were confirmed killed during the strike and there was no mosque in

the area.

A councillor representing the area, Abdullahi Ismail, confirmed the incident, saying the area was a danger zone because of the activities of terrorists.

Speaking to journalists, the villagers said among the victims were farmers and children who were at the community mosque that day.

"The strike disfigured the bodies of most of those affected. 23 mutilated bodies were gathered from the scene and had been buried according to Islamic rites. We gathered body parts of 23 people who were identified by relatives, including children and they have been buried.

"Of course, Yadin Kidandan, is a danger zone because it is under the control of bandits. But there are also innocent villagers who still live around there because they have no other place to go just like the

casualties that we witnessed on Friday. So, we discovered that when the strike occurred, most of the people at the mosque died.

"It was a crowded place because there was a local market close to the mosque which was also affected. The incident happened around 2pm," a survivor who craved anonymity has said.

"Yes, it is true that there was a strike by a plane on Friday at a mosque in Jika da Kolo village that claimed many lives, including a few from our village who went to their farms or to do business at the local market close to the mosque. Many people were killed, among them farmers and children who had gathered around the mosque.

"We heard when the plane arrived; it dropped something and a moment later, we heard a loud sound because I was in a nearby village.

"Thereafter, family members of the victims went to

the scene and recognised their relatives for the funeral. With little investigation, those who threw the bomb should have established that the bandits don't live within the villages; they are in the bushes. It is a difficult moment for us," another local identified as Malam had said.

The villagers, therefore, called on the Federal and Kaduna State governments to investigate this incident, saying the areas because they don't have any other place to go.

While reacting to the villagers, the Deputy Director, Public Relations and Information, NAF, Group Captain Kabiru Ali, said the airstrikes were only rained on the logistics base of terrorists.

According to him, reports from independent sources, including local informants around the general area, confirmed that the logistics base was totally destroyed and

scores of terrorists were killed as a result of the attack.

"Intensive intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance confirmed the consistent presence of terrorists and their motorcycles at the location. Additional intelligence revealed that the logistics base belonged to the notorious terrorist kingpin Kadade Gurgu, a close ally of Dogo Gide.

"Furthermore, available intelligence at the disposal of the

NAF at Kaduna has confirmed that Kadade Gurgu has been providing shelter for notorious terrorist kingpins following the aggressive military operations in Sokoto and Zamfara states.

"Accordingly, the Air Component dispatched an aircraft, supported by an Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) platform, to attack the target. The target area initially appeared un-inhabited. However, as the aircraft approached, some of the terror-

ists were seen emerging from under the shrubbery and running away from the area.

"Subsequently, the targets were engaged, recording successful hits on the logistics facility, which was engulfed in flames with thick black smoke seen. Reports from independent sources, including local informants around the general area, later confirmed that the logistics base was totally destroyed and scores of terrorists were killed as a result of the attack.

"The NAF, in collaboration with surface forces, will continue to dominate the battle space through extensive situational awareness, constant patrols, and targeted interdiction of bandits' safe havens within its area of responsibility and neighbouring states. The aim is to decimate and flush out terrorism and criminal activities within the North-west and North-central geopolitical zones," he added.

Dangote Granite Mines disburses
scholarships to students in