

NAF gunships kill bandits in Zamfara forests

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File photo

Adelani Adepegba, Abuja

The Nigerian Air Force has killed a large number of bandits operating in Sububu, Birnin Magaji and Rugu Forests in Zamfara State.

The NAF Air Task Force for ‘Operation Diran Mikiya’ neutralised the criminals during armed reconnaissance missions conducted from August 9-11, 2018.

The NAF Director of Public Relations and Information, Air Comm. Ibikunle Daramola said in a statement in Abuja on Monday that the attack at Sububu Forest was executed on the afternoon of August 9 following the discovery of a bandits’ hideout within the area.

Daramola explained that earlier in the morning, the ATF had conducted a coordinated clearance operation involving NAF Special Forces at a suspected armed bandits’ camp on the outskirts of Galadi in the Northwest of Zamfara State.

During the operation, he said, the bandits were discovered to have vacated the camp and dispersed into the nearby Sububu Forest.

“Consequently, the ATF dispatched a combat aircraft for armed reconnaissance to seek out and destroy the bandits. The aircraft subsequently spotted a large number of bandits within the forest and neutralised them,” he stated.

The NAF narrated that on August 10, a combat helicopter on a reconnaissance mission spotted a group of bandits, armed with automatic weapons and mounted on motorcycles, at a location about 6km Northeast of Birnin Magaji in the Eastern part of Zamfara State.

From all indications, it added, the armed bandits were advancing for an attack on Birnin Magaji, noting that a helicopter gunship was scrambled to provide additional combat support.

Both helicopters effectively engaged the armed bandits and neutralized many of them, the Air Force stated.

The NAF further said the ATF conducted another successful attack that neutralized armed bandits at Rugu Forest on August 11, noting that the mission was initiated based on credible intelligence that a location on the fringes of Rugu Forest near Ajia, in the Eastern part of Zamfara State, was being used by the bandits as a logistics staging area for the supply of arms and ammunition.

“Accordingly, a fighter aircraft and helicopter gunship were dispatched to attack the location within the forest. Upon arrival over the objective, several armed bandits were seen on motorcycles. They were attacked and neutralized in successive strikes by the two aircraft,” the statement said.

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