

Army kills 10 suspected kidnappers, bandits

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• The recovered weapons, motorcycles Photo: Olaleye Aluko

Olaleye Aluko, Abuja

Troops of Division 1, Nigerian Army, have shot dead six suspected kidnappers and four bandits during a clearance operation in the Kidandan, Unguwan Bilya, Sofa and Unguwan Nakuli areas along the Abuja-Kaduna Expressway.

PUNCH Metro learnt that the troops on *Operation Whirl Punch* had an encounter with the kidnappers, who sneaked in from the Birnin-Gwari area on Monday. Six of them were shot dead.

Four bandits were reportedly killed by the troops in Kidan Isa, Gidan Haruna, Mobale and Kuduru areas on the same day during another clearance operation.

It was gathered that an AK-47 rifle magazine, 16 rounds of 7.62mm special ammunition, one dane gun, a locally-made pistol and two mobile phones were recovered by the military from the suspects.

Our correspondent learnt that the army also arrested a kidnap suspect, identified only as Musa, for the kidnap of one Alhaji Ahmadu and two other persons from Kano State.

According to the army, Musa is currently being interrogated.

The Deputy Director, Army Public Relations, and Division 1's spokesman, Col. Muhammad Dole, confirmed the incidents on Thursday, noting that the operation was targeted at criminal hideouts on the Abuja-Kaduna Expressway.

He said, "The troops on *Operation Whirl Punch* in their efforts to tackle bandits and kidnappers on the Abuja-Kaduna Road, raided suspected kidnappers' hideouts on Monday. During the encounter, six suspected kidnappers were neutralised.

"Likewise in conjunction with the local vigilance groups, some identified escape routes used by bandits and kidnappers along Kuriga Gayam, Maganda, Chiki de Parlour and Farin Ruwa, all located in Chikun Local Government Area in Kaduna State were blocked, and many were ambushed.

"Four bandits were neutralised and some escaped with gun shots injuries. The clearance operation continued along Gwaska-Doka area, where troops encountered bandits who fled from Dogon Dawa and Kamuku forests. During the pursuit, the bandits abandoned four motorcycles and some valuable items, which were subsequently recovered."