

Army arrests two Zamfara traditional rulers, kills six bandits

Olaleye Aluko and Adeniyi Olugbemi

• **Emirs deny apologising to NAF over civilian deaths**

state for serving as informants to bandits.

TROOPS of the Nigerian Army attached to Operation Harbin Kumama 3 have arrested the traditional heads of Doka and Mutu villages in the Gusau Local Government Area of the

The troops also shot dead six bandits in Kirsu and Sunke villages in the Anka Local Government Area of Zamfara State during a gun battle.

The arrest of the traditional heads comes two weeks after the Minister of Defence, Mansur Dan-Ali, said some traditional rulers in Zamfara and the North-West region helped bandits to perpetuate criminal activities.

Although the Zamfara State Council of Chiefs denied the allegations, the minister insisted in another statement by his Public Relations Officer, Col Tukur Gusau, a week later that the Federal Government had

some security reports from the region indicating some traditional rulers of complicity in banditry and killings in the state.

According to the army on Monday, apart from the arrests of the leaders of Doka and Mutu villages, whose names were not disclosed, the troops nabbed 16 other suspected informants and errand men to the bandits.

Our correspondent learnt that the troops were on a clearance operation in Kirsu and Sunke villages in the Anka Local Government Area when they ambushed the bandits and engaged them in a shoot-out for about two hours.

The soldiers thereafter killed six of the bandits, recovered two AK-47 rifles and two motorcycles.

Our correspondent learnt that the bandits were armed with "sophisticated automatic weapons" but were forced to flee, abandon their camps and logistics, which were subsequently destroyed by the troops.

The Director, Army Public Relations, in a statement on Monday, confirmed the arrests of the village leaders and the deaths, of the bandits, saying three motorcycles, two dane guns, two machetes, among

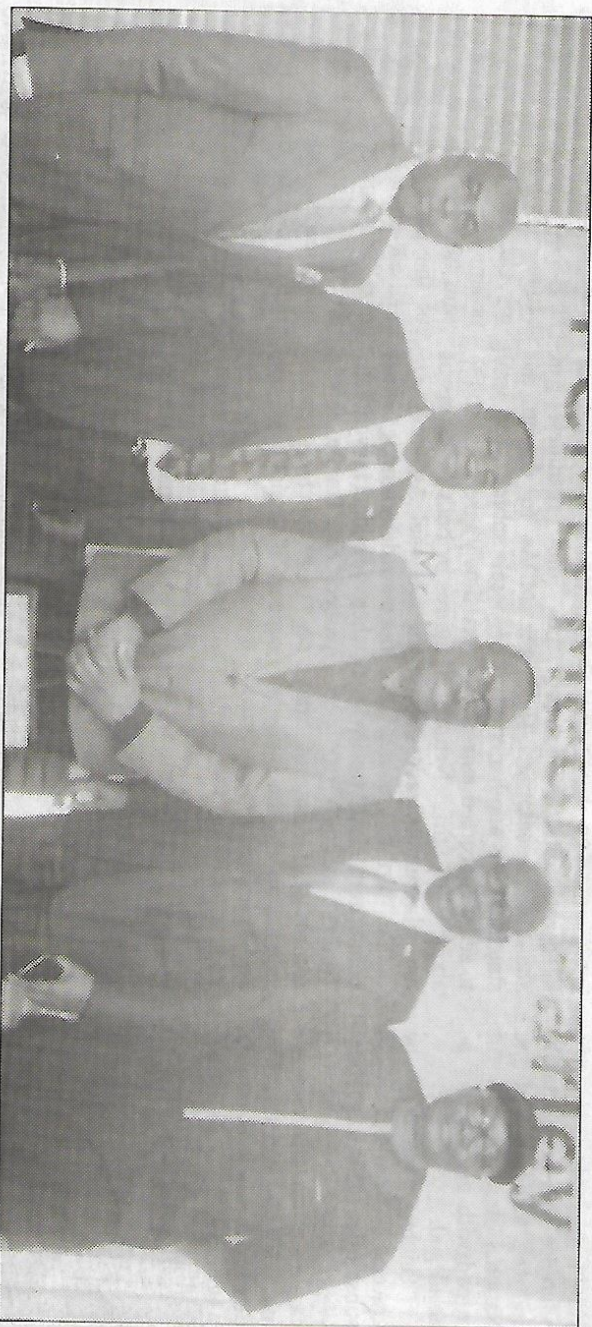
engaged the bandits in a shoot-out at the bushes of Kirsu and Sunke villages which resulted in the extermination of six criminals, the recovery of two AK-47 rifles and two motorcycles.

"In Doka and Mutu villages in the Gusau LGA, troops also had a serious encounter on Saturday with a group of bandits which lasted for about two hours. The brigands were armed with sophisticated automatic weapons, but they were overpowered by the troops, forcing them to flee from their hideouts. Eighteen suspected informants to the bandits were arrested, including the village heads of Doka and Mutu villages."

He added, "The Force Commander, Maj.-Gen Hakeem Otiiki, said the troops would continue to go after bandits in Zamfara and the contiguous states of Kebbi, Katsina and Sokoto."

Meanwhile, the Zamfara State Council of Chiefs has denied apologising to the Nigerian Air Force over its allegations that innocent villagers were victims of air strikes targeted at bandits and kidnappers terrorising the state.

Chairman of the State Council of Chiefs, Alhaji Attahiru Ahmad, the Emir of Anja,



• **L-R: Media Relations Officer, First City Monument Bank, Mr Rafiu Mohammed; Group Head, Corporate Affairs, Mr Diran Olojo; Managing Director, Corporate Shepherds Limited/guest speaker, Mr Idorenigen Enang; Regional Head, South-East & South-South, FCMB, Mr Okey Ogelle; and Head, Media Relations, Mr Louis Ibe, during a media parley on 'Achieving National Cohesion and Security Through Positive Reporting: The Role of the Media', in Port Harcourt... on Monday. Photo: FCMB**

Gunmen kill 14 in Katsina, Benue

Olaiye Oyelude and John Charles

and community members. Operation Puff Adder has been

killed five persons, among them an ex-serviceman.

"As a result of the attack, several people have been