

Bandits allegedly down NAF helicopter, kill 13 soldiers in ambush

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File copy: NAF helicopter

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Bandits currently wreaking havoc in the Chukuba Ward of the Shiroro Local Government Area of Niger State have killed 13 soldiers in the state.

The bandits were said to have ambushed and killed 13 soldiers along the Zungeru-Tegina road in the Madaka Ward of the Rafi Local Government Area of the state.

The criminals were also said to have brought down a Nigerian Air Force fighter helicopter on Monday morning in the area and killed the pilot.

The convener, Shiroro Concerned Youths, Mr. Sanni Kokki, disclosed this in a telephone interview on Monday.

Kokki said, “The unfortunate incident happened on Monday morning. As we speak, villagers living around the area are all now moving toward Erena.

“This is another problem because people are being displaced from their traditional homes to unknown destinations.

“We are having another humanitarian crisis on our hands with the economic challenges confronting our people.”

Confirming the incident, the senator representing Niger East Senatorial District, Sani Musa, lamented the situation describing it as highly unfortunate.

He called on the Federal Government to dispatch all its military and security arsenals to the troubled areas to save innocent lives and their property.

Musa said, “This is a very serious situation happening at a time we are happy that the issue of banditry is subsiding in our various communities in Niger State.

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“The Federal Government should, as a matter of urgency, deploy all its arsenal to curtail further spread

“We have been having a reduction in cases of attacks but now it appears as if there is a serious escalation of the situation.

“The most alarming situation now is that the attacks look like a planned work because the bandits are carrying out their operations simultaneously in many parts of Niger State.

“Government should please, as a matter of urgency, take drastic action on it and save lives and property of our people.”

The Nigerian Air Force, in a statement on Monday, confirmed that one of its aircraft crashed in Niger State.

The Air Force said the aircraft was on a casualty evacuation mission when the crash happened.

A statement on Monday by the NAF Director of Public Relations and Information, Air Commodore Edward Gabkwet said the aircraft departed Zungeru Primary School en route to Kaduna but was later discovered to have crashed in a village in the Shiroro Local Government Area of Niger State.

Gabkwet said, “A Nigerian Air Force MI-171 helicopter on a casualty evacuation mission crashed today, August 14, 2023, at about 1pm at Chukuba Village in Niger State.

“The aircraft had departed Zungeru Primary School en route Kaduna but was later discovered to have crashed near Chukuba village in Shiroro Local Government Area of Niger State.”