

NAF kills bandit kingpin, police intensify Kaduna highways patrol

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NAF personnel

| Solomon Odeniyi and Tukur Muntari

A kidnap kingpin identified as Janari and some of his foot soldiers have been killed during operations conducted by the air component of Operation Whirl Punch in Kaduna State.

Janari was said to have masterminded several kidnaps within Kaduna State as well as the Abuja-Kaduna highway.

The Nigerian Air Force confirmed this in a statement on Sunday by its Director of Public Relations and Information, Air Vice Marshal, Edward Gabkwet.

Gabkwet stated that the order to strike was given after Janari and his cohorts were gathering to launch an attack on citizens.

He said, “Air strikes undertaken by the air component of Operation Whirl Punch, on Thursday, January 18, 2024, have neutralised a well-known terrorist and kidnap kingpin popularly known as Janari and several members of his syndicate.

“Janari and his cohorts have been responsible for several attacks and abductions within Kaduna State as well as along the Abuja-Kaduna highway. The strikes were authorised after Janari and his gang were sighted at a location near Gadar Katako in the Igabi Local Government Area of Kaduna State.

“Further exploitation revealed that they were massing up for a likely attack or kidnapping of vulnerable civilians, hence, the need to immediately attack the location. Intelligence received after the strike revealed that Janari was indeed eliminated alongside several other terrorists/kidnappers. “

Gabkwet also said similar operations targeted at kidnappers in Niger State were successful.

“Similar air strikes were also carried out on 20 January 2024 on confirmed terrorists and kidnappers’ hideouts near Chukuba in Niger State with various degrees of success. Feedback after the strikes was also positive as it confirmed that the targets were neutralised and their mobility destroyed,” the statement added.

The country is facing an epidemic of kidnapping and numerous citizens are being abducted by perpetrators in exchange for huge sums of money.

Consequently, various security agencies have intensified their efforts to curb these criminal activities in response to the surge in citizen abductions.

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Meanwhile, the Kano State Police Command said it has intensified joint security patrol along the major highways that link Kano with states that are battling with banditry, kidnapping and other security challenges.

The command's Public Relations Officer, Abdullahi Haruna, told The PUNCH in a telephone interview on Sunday that the joint patrol was being carried out along major highways linking Kano State with Kaduna, Katsina and Bauchi states.

He said in addition, the command had deployed a number of personnel at the notorious Falgore Forest which is located in the Doguwa Local Government Area of the state.

Doguwa LGA shares borders with Kaduna and Plateau states.

Falgore forest is notorious for being the hideout of cattle rustlers, armed robbers, bandits and kidnappers who use the place to perpetrate their heinous activities.

"We have made a massive deployment of armed personnel to Falgore Forest which shares a border with Kaduna state as part of measures being taken to check activities of bandits coming from that state (Kaduna).

"Even though Kano State is not experiencing serious security challenges, we are not relenting in our effort to ensure that the state is safe and secured," Haruna said.

According to him, the police engagement with communities where they are being enlightened on the need to participate actively in providing relevant information on the activities of criminals is also yielding the desired results.

"We have started the community engagement policing and it has started yielding fruitful results as informants and other criminals are being apprehended in various parts of the state," he said.

He said the state Commissioner of Police, Usaini Gumel, had directed the Area Commanders and Divisional Police Officers across the 44 local government areas of the state to intensify patrol across the state to check possible attacks by bandits.