

Many feared killed as soldiers, bandits clash in Plateau

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| Nigerian Army

Troops of Operation Safe have reportedly engaged bandits in a bloody clash in the Wase Local Government Area of Plateau State.

Residents of Gundiri community, where the clash took place, said many of the bandits were shot dead by the soldiers while the troops recorded some casualties.

It was learnt that the troops were in the LGA on a routine anti-banditry operation when the non-state actors confronted them.

The residents said although the bandits put up a strong fight, the troops succeeded in dislodging them.

A youth leader in Wase, Shapi'i Sambo, who spoke to our correspondent, said though he could not ascertain the casualty figure in the incident, a good number of bandits were killed when the soldiers descended on their camp.

Sambo added that some soldiers also paid the supreme price in the clash.

“After receiving reports of criminal activities being committed by the bandits on a daily basis, security personnel then moved in and dealt with them. Many of the bandits were killed while others fled,” Sambo said.

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A vigilante from the area, who pleaded not to be mentioned, confirmed the incident.

He narrated: “We had just returned from the area. I was among those who went with the soldiers to the area. Three soldiers were confirmed killed while more than 15 bandits also died in the incident. The residents of the community were happy with the coming of the security personnel to the area because the bandits were threats to their lives. They rustled cattle at their will and robbed them of their belongings, including money from time to time.”

The spokesman for the military Operation Safe Haven, Maj. Samson Zhakom, could not be reached for comment. His mobile line rang out when our correspondent called.

The Police Public Relations Officer in the state, Alabo Alfred, did not also pick up his calls.

Our correspondent reports that various communities in the Wase LGA were attacked by gunmen suspected to be bandits in recent times and residents said they had been operating in Bashir district for years.

Only two days ago, the corpse of a police officer, who was abducted on Wednesday last week around Kampani community in the Bashir district of the council area, was found in a bush by soldiers.

On May 21, bandits attacked the Zurak community, killing over 40 villagers and injuring many, including vigilantes who were supporting the security agents to maintain law and order in the council area.