

# Troops close in on bandit leader Turji, kill commanders, 24 militants

23rd January 2025



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It appears that troops are steadily closing in on notorious terrorist kingpin Bello Turji, following a series of recent bombardments on his hideouts by the Nigerian military.

In the last few weeks, the military has intensified operations targeted at Turji's known hideouts, which has been largely successful.

Turji is a notorious terrorist leader operating in North-western Nigeria, particularly Zamfara, Sokoto and Niger states.

He had vowed to unleash terror on residents of Zamafara communities in 2025 over the arrest of his associate Bako Wurgi.

On Wednesday, the Defence Headquarters announced that the second-in-command to terrorist kingpin, Bello Turji, Aminu Kanawa, has been killed by troops of Operation Fansan Yamma.

The DHQ also stated that troops inflicted serious injuries on some of Turji's close allies, including his younger brother.

This development comes after the DHQ revealed on Monday that troops killed Turji's fighters and son during clearance operations on his hideout.

The military also taunted the terrorist leader for abandoning his son and fighters during the gun duel.

The DHQ had previously vowed to capture or kill Turji in 2025, following his repeated mockery of the military and challenge to engage them in combat after being declared wanted and the arrest of his associate, Bako Wurgi, in December 2024.

In a statement issued on Tuesday, the DHQ reaffirmed its commitment to capturing Turji despite the recent surrender of two terrorist leaders in the North-West region.

Giving an update on the operation in the North West on Wednesday, the outgoing Director of Defence Media Operations, Maj Gen Edward Buba, also stated that over seven key commanders of Turji, along with more than 24 of Turji's fighters fleeing his hideout, were killed when troops stormed his hideout.

Buba said, "Sequel to ongoing military onslaught on terrorist in the NW of the country, between the 20-21 Jan 2025, troops of Operation FANSAN YAMMA neutralised the second-in-command of notorious terrorist leader Bello Turji's namely, Aminu Kanawa. Troops also inflicted terminal injuries on some of Bello Turji's close allies namely: Dosso (Bello Turji's younger brother) and Danbokolo (one of Turji's closest allies).

"Additionally, troops neutralised several of Bello Turji's key commanders namely: Abu Dan Shehu, Jabbi Dogo, Dan Kane, Basiru Yellow, Kabiru Gebe, Bello Buba and Dan Inna Kahon-Saniya-Yafi-Bahaushe,

among others. Furthermore, troops neutralised over 24 fleeing terrorist from Bello Turji's Camp around Gebe and Isa LGA of Sokoto State, as well as around Gidan Rijiyah in Shinkafi LGA of Zamfara State."

Buba also said troops killed another notable terrorist during the onslaught on Turji's hideout.

He said, "Troops also neutralised another notable terrorist during the onslaught on Bello Turji's enclave around Fakai high ground. He is identified as Suleiman, and a loyalist of late notorious terrorist leader, Halilu Sububu.

"The late Suleiman was leading a reinforcement team to rescue Bello Turji's Camp which was in disarray, when he was eliminated during the fire fight.

"The death of Bello Turji's second in command, close allies, commanders and combatants is a significant blow to the terrorist network in the NW of the country, as well as their military and fighting capabilities. These groups of terrorists were notorious for numerous kidnappings and terrorist attacks across the NW, particularly in Zurmi, Shinkafi, Isa, and Sabon Birni Local Government Areas in Zamfara and Sokoto States.

"Overall, troops are not relenting until these terrorists are completely destroyed. Troops operations are aimed at creating an atmosphere of safety and security for all citizens."

The onslaught on Turji and his group has brought delights to some residents of

Sokoto State has commended the Nigerian security agents, especially the Military for their efforts in dealing with bandits Kingpin and his gangs.

Speaking on the development, Abubakar Isa, a resident of Isa, in Isa local government area of the state, said the news of the killing is a welcome development to the people of the area.

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He called on the military not to rest on their oars until their leader, Bello Turji, is captured dead or alive.

Also speaking, Muhammad Abdullah, from Goronyo, said news of the killing came to the people of Goronyo as good news.

He said the people of the area especially those in the rural areas have been suffering from the antics of the bandits for a long time which he said has collapsed the economic activities of the local government.

Mallam Nuhu Bello, a commercial motorcycle operator in the state, said the killing is a welcome development for the people of Sokoto and Zamfara States.

Bello, who hailed from Shinkafi local government area of Zamfara, said the atrocities of Turji and his gang was the reason why he left his community where he used to farm for motorcycle riding in Sokoto.

“I ran from my community because of those bandits. I used to be a farmer but had to run for safety when we couldn’t access our farms unless we pay them tax.

“The killing will definitely make the people in Shinkafi feel good and happy, “ he added.

Mallam Altini Bashar, a security commentator while speaking with one of our correspondents, commended the military efforts in the victory being recorded.

He said the military actions resulted in killing of many members of the bandits group.

He however said the real identity of those killed can only be ascertained when the operation comes to an end.

“Yes, I heard of the exercise and the killings, but I cannot confirm those who have been killed in the exercise.

“ I believe after the end of the exercise, we will know the real identity of those who lost their lives in the fight”

Meanwhile, the Sokoto State Government warned residents to remain vigilant as military operations against bandit terrorists intensify in the eastern part of the state.

In a statement signed by the Special Adviser to Governor Ahmed Aliyu on Security Matters, retired Colonel Ahmed Usman, the government highlighted the success of the ongoing joint military operations, which he said had left the bandits disorganised.

The statement added that multiple terrorist enclaves had been destroyed, dozens of bandits neutralized and hundreds of kidnapped victims rescued.

The statement urged residents to be cautious and report any suspicious activities in their communities.

“As security forces increase pressure on the bandits, some of them are fleeing to other areas with injured members. We are raising awareness to ensure our people remain alert, as these bandits may attempt to hide in villages or seek medical treatment at local clinics under disguise,” the statement read.

The government reiterated its commitment to working with security agencies to restore peace and stability in the state, adding that residents were encouraged to play an active role by reporting unusual activities to the authorities to support the ongoing efforts to secure the region.

“This proactive measure aligns with the governor’s nine-point agenda to create a safer and more economically viable Sokoto State