

Military, police kill 30 bandits, lose five men in Katsina

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FILE: Bandits

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Joint security forces in Katsina State have neutralised at least 30 bandits during a coordinated counter-operation in the Faskari Local Government Area, following simultaneous attacks on three communities by hundreds of heavily armed criminals.

The attacks, which occurred around 5 p.m. on Tuesday, July 8, targeted the villages of Kadisau, Raudama, and Sabon Layi.

Prompt action by a combined team of Police Mobile Force operatives, military personnel, and the Nigerian Air Force averted a larger tragedy, but five security operatives and one civilian lost their lives in the confrontation.

Katsina State Commissioner for Internal Security and Home Affairs, Dr. Nasir Mu'azu, who disclosed the details on Wednesday, said the attackers were repelled after intense confrontations on the ground and coordinated airstrikes.

“Upon receiving intelligence on the attacks, security forces were immediately mobilised. Reinforcements from Dandume and the Nigerian Air Force were swiftly deployed. Our gallant operatives successfully repelled the bandits, forcing them to flee. Thirty of the criminals were neutralised by airstrikes as they attempted to escape,” Mu’azu said.

He confirmed the loss of three Police Mobile Force officers — Inspector Suleiman Ibrahim, Inspector Bello Bala, and Corporal Mohammed Lawal — as well as two soldiers and a civilian, Aliyu Sa’adu, from Kadisau.

Another officer, Ya’u Aliyu, sustained injuries and is receiving medical attention.

“While we celebrate the bravery of our security personnel, we mourn the loss of heroes who paid the ultimate price in defending our communities. On behalf of the government and people of Katsina State, I extend our deepest condolences to the families of our fallen heroes. Their sacrifice will never be forgotten, and their families will receive full government support,” he said.

Mu’azu reassured residents of the administration’s firm commitment to eradicating banditry and restoring peace across the state.

“Governor Dikko Umar Radda’s administration is fully committed to crushing criminal elements. We will not rest until peace is restored to every corner of our state. Our operations are being intensified in collaboration with federal security agencies,” he added.

The Katsina State Police Command also confirmed the incident in a separate statement issued by its Public Relations Officer, DSP Abubakar Sadiq.

Sadiq reiterated the police’s determination to continue safeguarding communities across the state.

“Upon receiving the distress report, the Divisional Police Officer mobilised and responded alongside reinforcements from Dandume and the Nigerian Air Force’s 213 Forward Operating Base. The team engaged the bandits in a fierce gun duel, resulting in several casualties on the side of the attackers. Sadly, three brave police officers and one civilian lost their lives,” Sadiq said.

The Commissioner of Police, CP Bello Shehu, while commending the fallen officers’ bravery, offered prayers for the repose of their souls and reaffirmed the command’s dedication to protecting citizens.

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He urged residents to remain vigilant and report any suspicious activity to nearby security personnel.

Meanwhile, investigations into the coordinated attacks are ongoing, with both the police and the state government pledging to provide further updates as more information becomes available.

‘Eight Plateau vigilantes killed’

Meanwhile, the Special Military Task Force in charge of maintaining peace in Plateau State, otherwise known as Operation Safe Haven, has confirmed that eight vigilantes were killed in an ambush by bandits last Sunday in the Kanam Local Government Area of the state.

The spokesman for the task force, Maj. Samson Zhakom, disclosed this in a statement on Wednesday.

Zhakom faulted earlier media reports (not by The PUNCH) “alleging the killing of 70 vigilantes.”

He said, “While OPSH confirms the occurrence of the event, certain details currently circulating are inaccurate. Below is an official account of what transpired.

“On 6 July 2025, a large group of vigilantes mobilised from Kanam LGA with the intent to conduct an independent operation without notifying OPSH troops. Upon arriving at Kukawa community, where they had temporarily halted for administrative purposes, the vigilantes engaged in a confrontation with some residents. Reports indicate that they attacked civilians and looted several provision shops in the area.

“Additionally, the vigilantes allegedly seized over 20 motorcycles from Kukawa residents, claiming they were finalising administrative procedures before proceeding to Odare Forest for their mission.

“However, while advancing toward the forest, the group was ambushed by bandits, resulting in the deaths of eight vigilantes. Several others are still missing. The remains of the deceased have been recovered and buried, while troops from Sector 2 OPSH in Wase are conducting search and rescue operations to locate the missing individuals.”

The statement warned vigilantes against conducting unauthorised operations without prior coordination with security forces, emphasising that such actions endanger both the operatives and civilians.

“In light of this incident, OPSH strongly advises all vigilante groups and individuals within the state against carrying out unauthorised operations without prior coordination with security forces. While we recognise the vigilantes’ intent to protect underserved areas, independent actions without OPSH’s approval endanger both the operatives and innocent civilians.

“OPSH remains committed to maintaining peace and security in Plateau State and will take decisive action against any individual or group undermining these efforts, regardless of their motives. We urge the public to continue supporting security agencies by providing actionable intelligence and reporting suspicious activities within their communities.”