

Air Force bombards Zamfara bandits

• Neutralises hideout, strongholds

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THE Nigerian Air Force (NAF) said its fighter jets have bombarded one of the strongholds of bandits terrorising communities in Zamfara State.

The fighter jets deployed to the Air Task Force (ATF) of Operation Diran Mikiya set up to rout banditry, was said to have destroyed bandits hideouts located on a compound in west of Tsamari in Birnin Magaji Local Government Area.

NAF Director of Public Relations and Information, Air Commodore Ibikunle Daramola who made this known in a statement said the attack was conducted at dawn on December 28 following intelligence reports indicating that the compound

was being used by the armed bandits as a camp from where they launched attacks against innocent civilians.

"Accordingly, the ATF detailed a Nigerian Air Force (NAF) Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) aircraft, which confirmed the presence of bandits armed with high calibre weapons at the location. Consequently, an Alpha Jet aircraft was dispatched to strike the compound, recording direct hits on the target area and resulting in significant damage to the structures and neutralisation of some bandits, as later confirmed by credible human intelligence sources. Surface troops later invaded the compound and recovered some motorcycles abandoned by the fleeing criminals.

"The ATF, working in concert with surface forces and other security agencies, will continue to conduct reconnaissance and air interdiction missions with a view to restoring normalcy to the affected states in the Northwest," he said.

Killings in the state have continued despite the deployment of crack security personnel including soldiers, Airforce personnel and equipment.

Following persistent attacks which have claimed hundreds of lives, Governor Abdulaziz Yari last week backed calls on President Muhammadu Buhari to declare a state of emergency in the state.

Governor Yari who said he was not opposed to imposition of emergency rule if it would end the spate of killings, which President Muhammadu Buhari

described as "horrendous acts of violence" and "crimes against humanity."

A statement by Garba Shehu, Senior Special Assistant to the President (Media and Publicity) last Monday, said "a major operation by the Nigerian Armed Forces, Police, Department of State Services and the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps, is being considered to restore peace and stability in the region."

Minister of Interior, Lt.-Gen. Abdulrahman Dam-bazau (retd), last week, also confirmed Federal Government's readiness to deploy additional security resources to end the killings and destruction of properties in the state.

The police in Zamfara had confirmed 17 people killed in the latest attack by bandits in Magami Village, Faru District of Maradun Local Government Area.

Militants suspend ceasefire, threaten fresh attacks