

# Military bombs bandits' enclaves, kill scores in Kaduna

**From Noah Ebije, Kaduna**

THE air component of Operation Whirl Punch has continued its aerial assaults on identified bandits' enclaves in some local government areas of Kaduna State, killing scores of the bandits.

The aerial strikes took place in Birnin Gwari, Giwa, Igabi and Chikun Local Government Areas of the state.

Governor Nasir El-Rufai received the report with gratitude, and praised the fighter crews for their thoroughness and consistency.

A statement by the state Commissioner for Internal Security and Home Affairs, Samuel Aruwan said: "Ground and air patrols will continue in these and other locations around the state.

"The air component of Operation Whirl Punch has continued aerial assaults on identified bandit enclaves around Kaduna State over the last week.

"According to an operational feedback to the Kaduna State Government, a major enclave south of Kidandan, Giwa LGA, which was confirmed as the hideout of a bandit, was struck and destroyed. The bandit and several others were neutralized in the strike.

"The hideout of bandit, Ali Kawaje in Birnin Gwari LGA, was similarly targeted and destroyed, as well as those of bandits Musa Pajelo and Kachalla Bello.

Targets were also engaged and destroyed in Walawa area, Fadaman Kanauta, and Kuduru. Bandits were sighted and neutralized in locations 4km southwest of Alhaji Ishiaka, 6km northeast of Maguzawa, and 2km west of Yelwa. Several

armed bandits were sighted and neutralized at Dankero, Giwa LGA.

"Areas covered in Chikun LGA include Gwagwada Forest, Kugosi, Godani, Twali, Gwagwada, Sarkin Pawa, Kabai, Kabusu Hills, Amara Hills, Sabon Gayan and Polewire. An active location was engaged and destroyed about 4km south of Godani.

"Furthermore, armed reconnaissance was carried out over Rima, Riyawa, Rumana, the Kaduna Airport area and adjoining locations

in Igabi LGA.

"Other areas covered by aerial patrols include Galadimawa, Kidandan, Dogon Dawa, Saulawa, Maidaro, Maganda, Goron Dutse, Sararai, Kushaka, Kuriga, Manini, Kuduru, Yelwa and Sabon Birni, spanning Birnin Gwari, Giwa and Igabi LGAs.

"Reconnaissance continued along the Kaduna-Birnin Gwari Road, Buruku, Kurmin Dande, Damba, Ungwan Yako, Udawa, Gagafada, and Kamfanin Doka.

"The aerial missions extended to the Kaduna-Abuja Road and Railway, including Jaka da Rabi, Olam Farms, Rijana, Katarari and Jere. Normal human and vehicular activities were observed. The same was the case in Hanawanka, Kukoki, Kadaga, Durumi, Pongu Geri and Kundu.

"Fighter jets maintained a presence over Ungwan Madaki in Kamazou, Chikun LGA. Kutura, Iburu, Kajuru, Kachia and Kankomi were also covered."

## Court jails ex-convicted drug dealer

**By Lukman Olabiya**

**A** former convicted drug dealer, Igwe Okoye Onwukwe, has again been convicted and sentenced to two years imprisonment with hard labour by the Federal High Court, Lagos, for smuggling 32.400 kilogrammes of cannabis sativa, popularly called marijuana to the United Kingdom (UK).

Okoye, who claimed to be clearing agent, was in November 2020, convicted and sentenced to two years imprisonment, by Justice Chukwujekwu Aneke of the same court for smuggling 1.64 kilogrammes of Cannabis Sativa.

He was, however, given an option of fine of N500,000.

Not quite long after he was released from prison after paying the fine option, he was rearrested again on October 15, 2021, by the operatives of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) for attempting to export 34.400 kilogrammes of the banned substance.

Following his arrest, he

was brought before Justice Peter Lifu on a three-count-charge of conspiracy, unlawful exportation of the banned weed, and procuring Ikechukwu kelvin to unlawfully export the same banned weed.

The prosecutor, Mr. Abu Ibrahim, during the convict's arraignment, told the court that the convict was arrested with the 16, 550 kilogrammes of prohibited weeds, on October 15, 2021, at Export Shed, a Customs point at the Murtala Mohammed International Airport, Ikeja, Lagos, during the clearance of cargoes to London, United Kingdom.

The prosecutor told the court that the convict conspired with the duo of 'Ezeugo' and 'James Darren' of Peckham, United Kingdom, (both now at large), to engage in the illicit act.

Abu also told the court that the convict procured Ikechukwu Kelvin on October 20, 2021, to illegally export 15.850 kilogrammes of the banned weed.

He told the court that the offences committed by the convict contravened sections 14 (b); 19 and 21(2)(d)

of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency Act, Cap N30, Laws of the Federation of 2004, and punishable under the same Act.

The convict had denied the allegations when he was first arraigned before the court sometime in November 2021. But midway into his trial, he changed his plea and admitted to committing the nefarious acts.

Following his admission to the commission of the crimes, the prosecutor reviewed the facts of the crimes, as well, and tendered several exhibits.

In his allucutor, the convict told the court that as a clearing agent, though not a registered one, he was deceived by his clients, who were the owners of the prohibited cargoes.

His counsel, Adebayo Onifade, also pleaded with the court to be merciful to his client in sentencing him because of his five children, wife and aged mother. He particularly urged the court to consider the option of fine in lieu of the custodian sentence.

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