

Military Expresses Regrets over Bomb Incident in Kaduna

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- Says troops kill 17 bandits

Kingsley Nwezeh in Abuja and John Shiklam in Kaduna

The military has expressed regrets over the bomb incident in Kabarasha village in Chikun Local Government Area of Kaduna State, which occurred last Thursday.

The Armed Forces of Nigeria has also said troops of Operation Thunder Strike and Whirl Punch deployed in the North-west to contain banditry killed 14 bandits during a joint clearance operations conducted in some villages in Chikun Local Government Area.

In a statement issued yesterday, the Coordinator, Defence Media Operations, Defence Headquarters, Maj. Gen. John Eneche, said a panel had been set up to investigate the incident in collaboration with Kaduna State government.

The bomb was said to have exploded in Kabarasha village on Thursday at about 2.00 p.m during an operation targeted at bandits terrorising communities in the state.

A church and a nearby building in the community were said to have been affected by the blast. According to the village head of Kabarasha, Mr. Joseph Daudu, "the incident was very terrifying," adding that the villagers, including himself, fled to other villages.

He said there was no casualty, and that "calm had returned and the people have returned to their homes."

Eneche, however, explained that the operation was jointly carried out by troops of Operation Thunder Strike, Whirl Punch and Nigerian Air Force to flush out bandits terrorising communities in Kaduna State.

He said 17 of the bandits were neutralised, while some escaped with gunshot wounds.

The statement said: "In continuation of operations to rid Kaduna State of bandits and other criminal elements, the Armed Forces of Nigeria, on May 7, 2020, conducted a joint clearance operation, involving troops of Operations Thunder Strike and Whirl Punch with air support from the Air Component of Operation GAMA AIKI, at suspected bandits' hideouts around Mashigi Galbi, Damba Community and Kabarasha villages, all in Gwagwada District of Chikun Local Government Area in Kaduna State.

"During the operation, 17 bandits were neutralised, while several others escaped with gunshot wounds.

"However, in the course of pursuing the bandits, three empty houses and a church building were partially damaged at Kabarasha village.

"There was no civilian casualty. The Armed Forces of Nigeria regrets this unfortunate incident and a panel has been set up to investigate the occurrence in liaison with Kaduna State Government.

"The buildings have been identified with a view to providing adequate compensation to the owners.

"Meanwhile, calm has been restored to the area. Few people, who initially fled the area due to fear of bandits' reprisal, have all returned to the community."

The statement reassured the public that the military would continue to work assiduously to restore peace and security to the North-west.

The statement thanked the public for their support and cooperation, while encouraging them to continue to provide credible information that would facilitate the operations of the Armed Forces of Nigeria.

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