

Troops neutralized 10 bandits, loses one soldier in fierce battle in Katsina

ON JANUARY 12, 2021 8:31 PMIN **NEWS**

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...arrested three collaborators

By Bashir Bello

The Nigerian Army on Tuesday says it has neutralized not fewer than 10 bandits and inflicted injuries on several others in a fierce battle with the bandits in Batsari and Faskari local government areas of Katsina State.

This was also as it says it loses one of its gallant soldiers while two others sustained injuries from the encounter.

The Acting Director, Defence Media Operations, Brigadier General Benard Onyeuko who disclosed this in a statement made available to newsmen also said the army arrested three collaborators and informants of the bandits as well as recovered arms and ammunition.

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Brig. Gen. Onyeuko said troops of the Operation Sahel Sanity carried out the offensive onslaught against the bandits which saw to the death of the five bandits in each of the council areas in the state.

According to him, “In furtherance of their operational activities and in line with the Chief of Army Staff Lieutenant General Tukur Yusufu Buratai’s directive extending Operation SAHEL SANITY to March, the gallant troops have increased the momentum of the Operation. They have continued to dominate the Northwest theatre with confidence building patrols, robust and aggressive ambushes coupled with clearance operations. This is with a view to completely wipe out the remnant bandits and other criminal elements from the region.

“Consequently, on 2 January 2021, based on credible human intelligence about the movement of armed bandits sighted crossing Garin Inu in Batsari LGA heading towards Bugaje in Jibiya LGA both in Katsina State, troops deployed at Batsari swiftly mobilized and laid ambush along the bandit’s route at Garin Garus. While at the ambush position, the gallant troops made contact with the marauding armed bandits and engaged them with overwhelming firepower thereby neutralizing 5 bandits while others escaped with varying degrees of injuries as indicated by traces of blood along their escape routes. Further exploitation of the area by the gallant troops led to the capture of 3 AK-47 rifles and 2 AK 47 Rifle magazines loaded with 18 rounds of 7.62 mm Special ammunition.

“In another development, on 10 January 2021, troops deployed at Sabon Layi while clearing bandits enclaves around Maigora general area in Faskari LGA of Katsina State, came in contact with armed bandits at Unguwar Rimi leading to a fierce gun battle. The troops were swiftly reinforced by another team from Faskari and supported by Helicopter Gunship delivering a lethal blow to the criminals thereby forcing the bandits to withdraw in disarray into the forest due to the troop’s superior firepower.

“During the exploitation phase of the operation, 5 bodies of neutralized bandits were found while several others were suspected to escape with gunshot wounds as indicated by bloodstains on their escape route. Regrettably, one brave soldier paid the supreme price while 2 others sustained minor injuries during the encounter. The wounded soldiers are in stable condition and currently responding to treatment in a military medical facility.

“Relatedly, on 3 January 2021, troops deployed at Dan Ali village acting on reliable information from reliable sources arrested a suspected bandits’ collaborator named Ya’u Tukur at Sabon Gida village in Kankara LGA of Katsina State. During preliminary investigations, the suspect confessed to being working for a notorious bandit gang that has been masterminding nefarious crimes including kidnapping for ransom in various places. Troops are on the trail of other members of the notorious gang.

“Furthermore, on 4 January 2021, troops deployed at Maraban Maigora acting on credible information arrested one Yahaya Aliyu while riding on a new motorcycle. The arrest was executed following reports from reliable sources on the suspect’s alleged involvement in the kidnapping and facilitating payment of ransom for kidnap victims in the area. During preliminary investigations, the suspect admitted his involvement in the alleged crimes, adding that the motorcycle he was riding was part of a bounty as ransom from a kidnapped victim.

“Additionally, on 8 January 2020, troops deployed at Yankara while acting on a tip-off arrested a suspected bandit’s collaborator named Alhaji Adamu Mamman around Yankara general area in Faskari LGA of Katsina State. The suspect has been at large following his involvement in harbouring bandits in his house.

“To this end, the gallant troops of Operation SAHEL SANITY are commended for the successes and their unequalled commitment. They are further urged not to rest on their oars until the Northwest zone is rid of all criminal elements.

“Additionally, the good people of the Northwest are once more assured of the Nigerian Army’s commitment to the safety of lives and properties within the zone.

“They are also encouraged to avail the troops with timely and credible information that will assist in the conduct of their operations,” Brig. Gen. Onyeuko however appealed.

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