

## Tension over 85 killed in Army's error bombing of bandits in Kaduna



## —Bombing regrettable — CAN; NEF demands thorough investigation

By Ibrahim Hassan

**KADUNA —** THE Nigerian Army, mistaking a village for a bandits' camp on Sunday night, bombed a Maulud event in Kurmin Biri village in Igabi Local Government Area of Kaduna State, killing no fewer than 85 villagers.



A fresh statement from the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) stated that, based on information from the local authorities, 85 dead bodies have been buried thus far, and the search is still ongoing.

The report indicated that the casualties ranged from children, women, and the elderly.

Meanwhile, no fewer than 53 others seriously injured are in hospitals, receiving treatments.

However, a survivor, said over 100 were killed.

It was learned that while the event attendees were trying to rescue and take the injured to a nearby health facility and the dead for burial, the aircraft returned and dropped a second bomb, causing further damage in the village.

Meanwhile, the Nigeria Air Force, NAF, has distanced itself from the bombing of the village.

This came as Governor Uba Sani of Kaduna State ordered a thorough investigation into the incident to forestall future occurrence.

The governor also convened an emergency security meeting that had in attendance representatives of the Nigerian Army, the Commissioner of Police, Director of the Department of State Services, DSS, Chairman of Jama'atul Nasril-Islam, JNI, Kaduna State chapter.

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Similarly, the Christian Association of Nigeria, CAN, has expressed sadness over the development.

Meanwhile, the Arewa Youth Consultative Forum, AYCF, described the incident as a sad news and called for a thorough investigation on 'this avoidable mistake.'

Meanwhile, the General Officer Commanding One Division Nigerian Army, Major-General V. Okoro, yesterday, briefed the Kaduna State Government that the Nigerian Army was on a routine mission against terrorists but inadvertently attacked affected members of the Kurmin Biri village in Kaduna State.

Residents narrate account

A resident in the affected community told journalists that when Muslims at Biri were observing Maulud event at the Tudun Biri village in Igabi LGA of a plane that hovered above the celebrants dropped a bomb which exploded and killed many.

According to him, "While we were picking the dead and trying to rush the injured to a nearby health facility, the plane returned and dropped a second bomb, causing further damage."

Another local in the village, told Vanguard, "We were celebrating Maulud when the jet dropped the bomb, resulting in the immediate death of more than 50 people."

**Kaduna govt orders probe**

**Samuel Aruwan, Overseeing Commissioner, Ministry of Internal Security and Home Affairs**

**Attairs, Kaduna State, in an interview with the BBC Hausa Service, mulled compensation for the victims, adding that only the military authorities could speak on its intelligence gathering before the incident.**  
**In a statement, yesterday, Aruwan said: "The Kaduna State Government has received briefings on Sunday night's attack which left several citizens dead and others injured.**

**"In a meeting presided over by the Deputy Governor, Dr. Hadiza Balarabe, which had in attendance heads of security agencies, religious and traditional leaders, the Nigerian Army explained the circumstances which led to the unfortunate and unintended attack.**

**"The General Officer Commanding One Division Nigerian Army, Major V. Okoro, explained that the Nigerian Army was on a routine mission against terrorists but inadvertently affected members of the community.**

**"The Deputy Governor at the end of the meeting, conveyed the condolences of the government and people of Kaduna State to the families that lost their loved ones, and prayed for the repose of the victims' souls.**

**"As of the time of this update, search-and-rescue efforts are still ongoing, as dozens of injured victims have been evacuated to Barau Dikko Teaching Hospital by the government.**

**"Heads of security agencies, who attended the meeting include the Commissioner of Police, M.Y. Garba, and Director of DSS, Abdul Eneche. Chairman of Kaduna State Chapter of JNl, Prof. Shafi'u Abdullahi, led other religious leaders. Also present at meeting was the District Head of Rigasa, Alhaji Aminu Idris in whose domain the incident occurred," he added.**

**Air Force denies involvement**

In a statement, Air Commodore Edward Gabkwet, Director of Public Relations and Information of the Nigerian Air Force, said: "The news making the rounds alleging that Nigerian Air Force aircraft accidentally killed innocent civilians in Kaduna is false.

"Please be informed that the NAF has not carried out any air operations within Kaduna State and environs in the last 24 hours.

"Also, note that the NAF is not the only organisation operating combat armed drones in the North western region of Nigeria. It is also important to ensure that due diligence is always exhausted by the media before going to press with unverified and unconfirmed reports," he added.

**Gov Sani offers  
free medical**

The governor in a statement by his Chief Press Secretary, Muhammad Shehu, said that the affected residents had gathered to mark Maulud festivities at Tudun Biri community, Igabi LGA, when the incident occurred.

Governor Sani said that he had ordered a thorough investigation to forestall future occurrences, by immediately convening an emergency security meeting that had in attendance representatives of the Nigerian Army, the Commissioner of Police, Director of DSS, Chairman of JNIA Kaduna State chapter.

"I have ordered immediate investigations into the tragic incident. We are determined to prevent a repeat of this tragedy and reassure our people that their protection would be prioritised in the sustained fight against terrorists, bandits and other criminal elements.

"I have also directed the immediate evacuation of the injured to the Barau Dikko Teaching Hospital for emergency medical attention. The government will be responsible for their treatment and related logistics."

Appealing for calm in the affected communities, the governor said: "Search and rescue operations in the area are ongoing. The state government has dispatched top government officials to the area to assess the situation, reach out to the families of the victims and advise the government on the immediate actions and measures to be taken to lessen the pains of the families of the victims."

The governor on behalf of the people of Kaduna State extended condolences to the families of the deceased and prayed for the total and speedy recovery of the injured who are currently receiving treatment at Barau Dikko Teaching Hospital.

"The Kaduna State Government regrets the loss of lives and remains committed in ensuring that residents continue to live and conduct their legitimate businesses without fear," the governor said.

#### **Tudun Biri bombing regrettable — CAN**

Reacting to the bombing, CAN Kaduna State chapter in a statement by its chairman, Rev. John Hayab, said: "The situation occurred when the Nigerian Army was on a routine mission against terrorists but inadvertently affected members of the community leaving several citizens dead and many others injured.

"CAN wishes to commiserate with the Muslim Ummah as many of the affected were said to be celebrating the Maulud, which is an unfortunate incident. CAN sends its heartfelt condolences to the families who lost loved ones, the Tudun Biri community, and the good people of Igabi LGA, the Emir of Zazzau, and the government of the state. While CAN prays for the repose of the souls of those who died in the incident, she prays for a speedy recovery for those receiving treatment due to injuries sustained.

"The wrong target bombing is most unfortunate, especially as it comes at a time when the security agencies and Nigerians alike are working tirelessly to ensure that our society is free from criminal elements that go about killing, abducting, rustling cattle, and destroying property of innocent citizens.

"Therefore, CAN encourages the Muslim Ummah and the good people of the Tudun Biri area to accept the ill-fated incident not as a deliberate act but as an error that the Nigerian Army has acknowledged and shows regret. It is our prayer that such an unfortunate incident is not repeated in the future, whether in Kaduna state or any part of the country.

"CAN will continue to pray for the government at all levels and the security personnel that God Almighty will give them the wisdom and understanding to end insecurity and support the maintenance of peaceful coexistence so that citizens will go about their legitimate businesses.

"CAN calls on the security agencies not to relent in the fight against insurgency and prays that society will soon be freed from criminal elements in the country."

#### **Arewa youth group condemns 'mistaken' bombing**

Also, Mr. Shettima Yerima, President General of AYCF, said: "It is sad that a security agency whose primary responsibility is to protect lives and property is now the one killing the people in the guise of 'mistake.' This is not acceptable because it is one mistake too much.

"We are calling on government to carry out thorough investigation into this avoidable 'mistake' if intelligence gathering is anything to go by. Perpetrators of this

~~avoidable mistake in intelligence gathering is anything to go by. Perpetrators of this~~  
**so-called mistake must be made to explain beyond reasonable doubt how religious people carrying out religious activities could be mistaken for terrorists.**

**“While we commiserate with families of those who were killed, we pray God to give speedy recovery to the injured. Enough of this unwarranted killings of innocent people by those who should protect them,” the group added.**

**It was by Allah’s mercy that we survived – Survivor**

A survivor, Malam Baba Muhammad of Tudun Biri, said: “We were all gathered in the village centre, our young and old, when we saw the plane flying. It came right above us, there was a tree nearby. The plane dropped the first bomb and flew away.

“Many children and women who were there for Maulud celebration, were killed. Over 50. As we were trying to take those with injury to safety, the plane came and dropped a second bomb. It was by Allah’s mercy that we survived. The bomb killed more.

“We are now evacuating the dead, our women are crying, wailing for losing their children, who used to gather in the square for the Maulud. It’s devastating. We are peaceful people,” he said.

He claimed that more than 100 people were killed.

**NEF demands thorough investigation**

On its part, the Northern Elders Forum, NEF, said it found the recent “accidental” bombing by the Nigerian military a matter of serious concern regarding the safety and well-being of civilians in conflict zones.

Abdul-Azeez Suleiman, Spokesperson, NEF, said: “The Forum demands a thorough investigation into the incident which occurred at Tudun Biri, a community within Igabi council of Kaduna State killing scores of innocent civilians.

“NEF understands that the Kaduna State government had risen to the occasion and also pledged that the victims of the strike would be compensated. However, beyond compensation for the victims, a thorough investigation is essential to ensure justice for the affected civilians, prevent future occurrences, and uphold the principles of human rights and international humanitarian law

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**“By identifying the causes and circumstances surrounding the incident, the investigation can determine whether any negligence or misconduct occurred, holding those responsible accountable.**

**This will provide a sense of closure and compensation to the victims, fostering trust between the military and the civilian population.**

**“Conducting a thorough investigation into the accidental bombing is essential to prevent similar incidents from happening in the future.**

**“By analyzing the circumstances that led to the tragedy, the investigation can identify any systemic failures, gaps in training, or inadequate protocols that may have contributed to the accident.**

**“Armed with this knowledge, the military can implement necessary reforms, such as improved coordination, enhanced intelligence gathering, and stricter adherence to rules of engagement. These measures will minimize the risk of accidental bombings and protect civilian lives during military operations.**

**“An investigation aligns with the principles of human rights and international humanitarian law. These legal frameworks emphasize the protection of civilians during armed conflicts and require states to conduct impartial investigations into alleged violations.**

**“NEF condoles the families of the affected civilians as well the Kaduna State government for the unfortunate and regrettable incident,” it added.**