

A Review by  
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**AGENCY:**  
*Image Merchants Promotion*

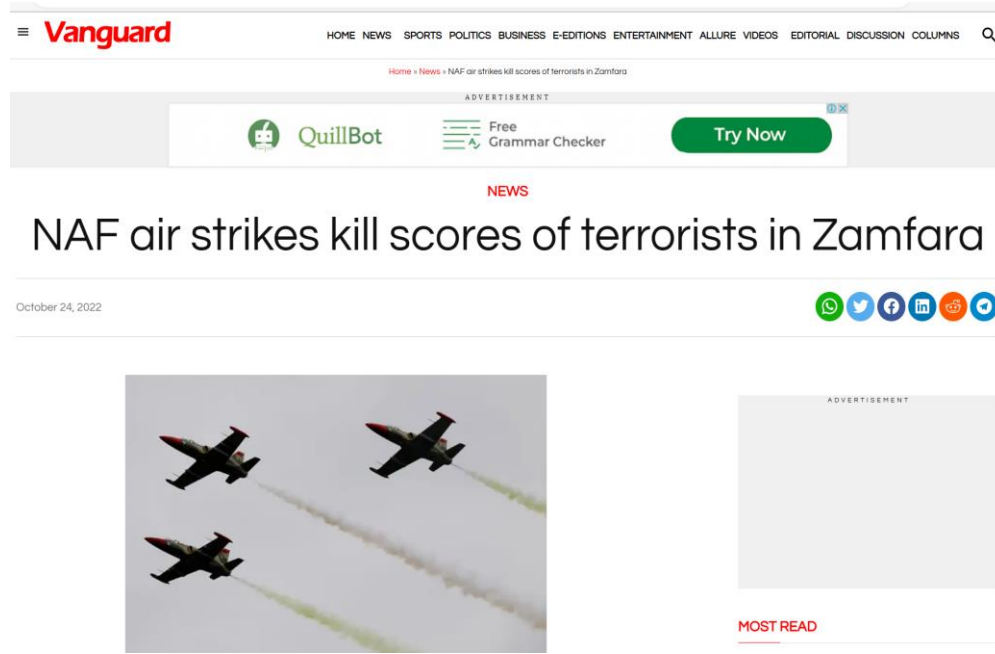
**CLIENT:** *Nigerian Airforce  
(NAF)*

**TITLE:** *Airstrikes:  
Counterterrorism with  
Alternative Narratives*

# SUMMARY

Having realised the credibility of third-party narratives, rather than formal and direct statement, the Nigerian Airforce (NAF) provided enablement for independent media reports and third-party news narratives on the counter-insurgency campaigns.

The independent news report and alternative narratives from credible media sources on the success on the counter-terrorism were widely used in the media and boost the confidence of the citizens and the morale of the fighting troops.



## BACKGROUND

- Nigeria has been facing unprecedented security challenges from different quarters as a result of persistent activities by non-state actors across the length and breadth of the country.
- The Nigerian Airforce (NAF) in collaboration Armed forces of Nigeria played major roles in decimating enemies through airstrikes against enemies of the state in well coordinated joint operations.
- Airstrikes by NAF in the counterterrorism as well as counterinsurgency campaigns are the game changers.
- With gruesome acts of banditry and terrorism in some parts of the country, the citizenry were sceptical in trusting official accounts and releases from the security services.
- Realising the believability of third-party accounts for counternarratives, NAF facilitated the media coverage by independent media on air operations





## PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES

1. Despite the military efforts to combat the terrorism, citizens doubted official accounts of the operation from military and security services.
2. The negative reports on military operations by some media weakened the morale of the troops and undermine the confidence in the citizenry on their safety.
3. The military success operations were either under reported or not reported at all.
4. Media's over obsession with the bad-news-is-good-news syndrome to the detriment of newsworthy positive development from military operation
5. Lack of effective media relationship strategies to sustain understanding of independent press



# OPPORTUNITY:

- Opportunity: Considering the high rate of believability of independent media report, the Nigerian Airforce, encouraged and facilitated independent media to reach out to the locals and others in the affected communities and the frontlines for first-hand information.
- The service also responded adequately and timely to media enquiries.
- **AIMS:** The fear of the public rejecting the official narrative from the government prompted a third-party endorsement and independent report on the efforts of the military operational success.



## OBJECTIVES OF THE PR CAMPAIGN

1. Sustain and improve media relations activities.
2. Build public confidence and reduce mistrust among citizens.
3. Dispel falsehoods and correct erroneous impressions on mainstream and social media.
4. Provide facts and figures against one-sided information and fake report.
5. Boost the Morale of the Fighting troops.



## LOCATION AND ENDORSEMENTS

### **Geographic Location:**

While fights bandits in Northwest, it counter terrorism in North-East with aerial bombardments in the elimination of terrorists and destruction of their enclaves.

### **Defining the Problem:**

For strategic, national security and operational reasons, Nigeria's military doesn't release video clips of its operations due to the classified nature of the activities

Experiences have shown that charlatans masquerading as journalists occasionally aggravate security situations with fake reports, unfounded allegations, and falsehoods against Nigerian military.

There is nevertheless vital information that are essential in providing positive updates on accomplishments. It is therefore necessary for the Nigerian Airforce to cultivate friendly but independent media, to provide the exact narrative from objective perspectives.

**Endorsements/Support:** The Nigerian Air Force endorsed the intervention of PRNigeria in providing true information in the rapid response mission.

### **Communication Tactics:**

- ☐ Media Relations
- ☐ Social media
- ☐ Media Tours
- ☐ Criss communication

### **Targets:**

- ☐ Media organisations
- ☐ Government
- ☐ Citizens
- ☐ Troops



# STAGES

## Orientation stage:

- Media Engagement: The NAF Spokesperson did not only brief and interact with the media on necessity of independent reports, he also facilitated the media coverage and provide press access to the local for eye-witness accounts.
- Operational videos and images are declassified for selected media which provided enough concrete evidences and facts of the military accomplishments

## Implementation Stage:

- Without disclosing its sources, PRNigeria, as the major independent media released several news stories of the NAF bombardment of the terrorists and their enclaves.
- The Information and PR officers where the military attacks were conducted, also provided timely, accurate first-hand information on successes of the NAF airstrikes. Another third-party narrative strategy.





- **Creative Solutions:**

The Nigeria military utilises its bi-weekly press briefing to give credence to the initial information by independent media with relevant images and videos to further reconfirm the authenticity of the independent media reports.

- **Difficulty eliminated:**

When other media were sceptical of using the exclusive reports on the airstrikes, PRNigeria provides declassified operational photos which attract more press coverage with proper attributions to the source.

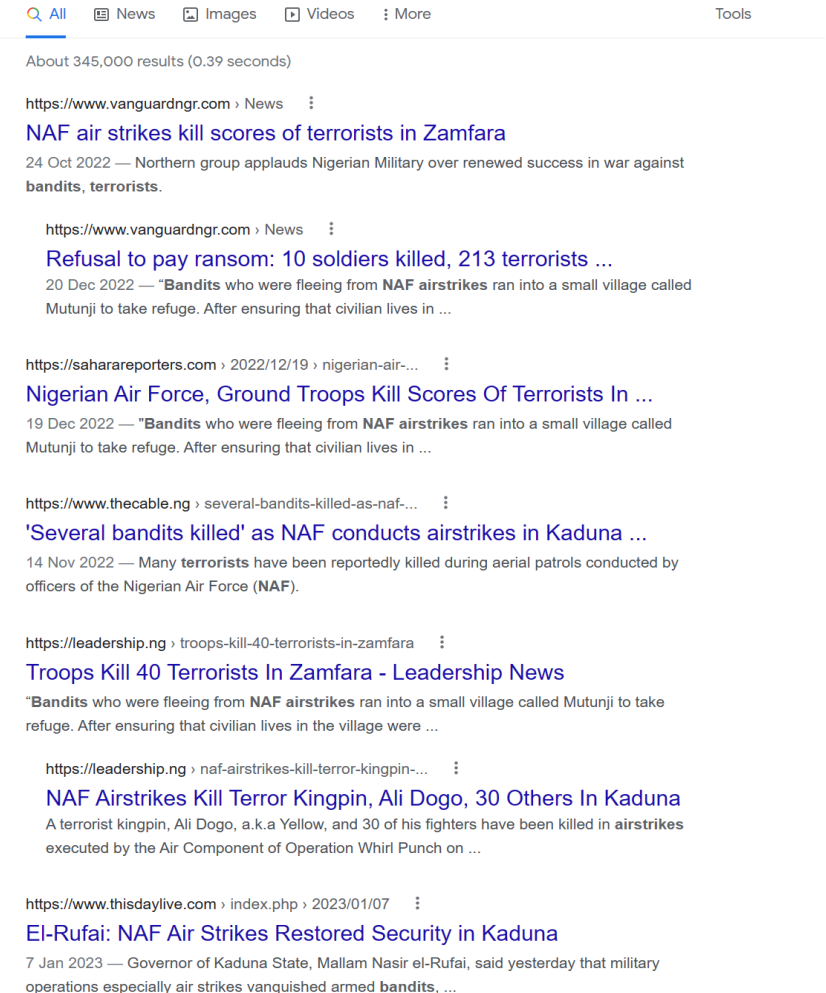


# OUTCOMES

**Massive Reportage:** several and timely reportage of NAF airstrikes by mainstream and online media were published.

**Fair Editorial:** There are fair and positive press editorials and reportage that were developmental and patriotic.

**Boost Troops' Morale:** the report of the gallantry by the Nigerian Airforce in sweeping operations and counter attacks inspired other arm of the military to confront bandits enclaves which has led to massive reduction in banditry activities in the last 5months.



# OUTCOMES

- **Enhance citizens' confidence:** the confidence of the Nigerian citizens on the capability of the military against banditry and terrorism.
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- **Reassuring Safety on 2023 Elections:** The reports on successful military operations reassured electorate on safety of exercising the electoral franchise in the forthcoming general elections in February and March 2023



## MEDIA REFERENCES

### CONCERNS BEFORE THE CAMPAIGN

Why military's reluctant to wipe out bandits — Gov el-Rufai <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.vanguardngr.com/2022/02/why-militarys-reluctant-to-wipe-out-bandits-gov-el-rufai/amp/>

We've given security forces freedom to deal with terrorists, bandits — Buhari <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.vanguardngr.com/2022/08/insecurity-weve-given-security-forces-full-freedom-to-deal-with-terrorists-bandits-buhari/amp/>

Army laments negative perception by online community <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.vanguardngr.com/2021/11/army-laments-negative-perception-by-online-community/amp/>

Buhari, Military Efforts In North- East Underreported – Don <https://independent.ng/buhari-military-efforts-in-north-east-underreported-don/>

Have faith in Nigerian military, Buhari urges citizens <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/more-news/552975-have-faith-in-nigerian-military-buhari-urges-citizens.html>

Soldiers warned against uploading sensitive information on social media <https://www.thecable.ng/soldiers-warned-uploading-sensitive-information-social-media/amp>

Insecurity: Defence Chief seeks media support for military operations <https://www.blueprint.ng/insecurity-defence-chief-seeks-media-support-for-military-operations/>

### DURING THE CAMPAIGN

No Mercy: Military Airstrikes 'Destroy' Scores of Bandits, ISWAP Terrorists in Kaduna, Borno Communities <https://prnigeria.com/2022/09/01/military-airstrikes-finish/>

Kudos to the Nigerian Armed Forces as FG upscale Airpower <https://fmic.gov.ng/kudos-to-the-nigerian-armed-forces-as-fg-upscale-airpower/>

Kaduna govt confirms bombardment of bandits enclave by Airforce <https://dailypost.ng/2022/12/07/kaduna-govt-confirms-bombardment-of-bandits-enclave-by-airforce/?amp=1>

NAF Jets Bombard ISWAP Terrorists Converging for Meeting in 11 Boats <https://prnigeria.com/2021/10/22/naf-jets-bombard-iswap/>

NAF Jets Kill Zamfara Wanted Terrorists in Kaduna Villages <https://prnigeria.com/2022/12/05/naf-jets-kill-zamfara-wanted/>

After Attack on Presidential Convoy, NAF Jets Raid Katsina Villages, Kill Scores of Terrorists <https://prnigeria.com/2022/07/07/presidential-convoy-naf/>

NAF Jets Thwart ISWAP Road Blockade, Kill 13 Terrorists, Rescue 5 Captives <https://prnigeria.com/2022/06/06/naf-jets-thwart-iswap-road/>

IMAGES: Military Cannons Kill 50 Bandit-Terrorists in Zamfara, 33 in Kaduna as NAF Jets... <https://prnigeria.com/2022/04/02/images-military-cannons-kill/>

Buhari Will Hand Over A Safer Nation, Says Adesina <https://www.channelstv.com/2022/11/27/buhari-will-hand-over-a-safer-nation-says-adesina/>