

# Again, Commander, Soldiers Killed In Boko Haram Ambush



By Daily Trust

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**The Commanding Officer of the 242 Battalion, Monguno, Col. I.A. Mohammed and six soldiers lost their lives when an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) reportedly planted by insurgents went off in the Monguno Local Government Area of Borno State.**

Local sources said Col. Mohammed, was killed while on a reinforcement mission following an attack on a military formation by insurgents on Sunday night. The officer had responded to a

distress call from troops under attack at a Forward Operating Base (FOB) linked to the 242 Battalion.

This is as victims of the Jilli Market shelling, mostly traders and customers, shared moments the Nigerian Air Force (NAF) bombarded the location during an aerial operation on Saturday that claimed over 200 lives, according to residents and local authorities.

*Daily Trust* reports that the Boko Haram ambush occurred just three days after terrorists killed a Brigade Commander of the 29 Task Force, Brig. Gen. Oseini Braimah and 17 soldiers during the attack on the command in Benisheikh, Kaga LGA of Borno State.

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The Media Information Officer of the Joint Task Force (North East), Operation HADIN KAI, Lt. Col. Sani Uba, confirmed the attack, saying the incident occurred in the late hours of April 12, when Troops of Sector 3 of the OPHK came under an isolated Tango terrorist attack on Charlie 13 location in Monguno.

According to him, following intense fire exchanges, the terrorists were put to flight, with troops maintaining control of the location.

“Regrettably, the Commanding Officer, while courageously proceeding to the troops’ location to personally assess the situation, encountered an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) which severely affected his vehicle, leading to his death alongside six other gallant personnel.

“His actions, even after the immediate threat had been neutralised, reflected the highest traditions of military leadership; courage, selfless service, and leading from the front,” he said.

Lt. Col. Uba added that the willingness of the commanding officer to move towards the troops in the heat of the battle, despite the prevailing danger, “stands as a profound testament to his valour, sense of duty, and unwavering commitment to the welfare and operational effectiveness of his men.”

He said the OPHK deeply mourns the loss of this exceptional officer and the other brave personnel who paid the supreme price in service to the nation.

“Their sacrifice will forever remain etched in the memory of the Armed Forces and the grateful nation they served,” the statement added.



Some of the victims of the Nigerian Air Force (NAF) airstrike at Jillli market, receiving treatment at the Specialist Hospital, Geidam

### **Market airstrike: Survivors, victims’ relatives recount experiences**

Victims and survivors of the airstrike by the Nigerian Air Force (NAF) on Jillli weekly market located on the border of Yobe and Borno states have narrated their experiences following the Saturday bombings targeted at suspected Boko Haram insurgents.

According to witnesses, multiple military jets were involved in the operation. The strike hit the local market, where at least over 200 people were reportedly killed and dozens were injured.

At least 35 victims, including women and children, have been hospitalised at the Specialist Hospitals in Geidam and Damaturu, Yobe State and the Specialists Hospital, Maiduguri, Borno State.

In an earlier statement on Sunday, the Air Component of the Joint Task Force (North East), Operation HADIN KAI (OPHK), through its spokesperson, Sani Uba, said scores of terrorists were neutralised in the strike.

However, amid emerging reports of civilian casualties, the Nigerian Air Force (NAF), in a subsequent statement, announced that it has launched an investigation into the incident.

The NAF said it took the allegations seriously and had activated its Civilian Harm Accident and Investigation Cell (CHAI-Cell) to carry out a fact-finding mission at the scene.

Civil society organizations, including Amnesty International, and security experts condemned the strike, calling for an independent investigation amidst revelation by the Borno State Governor, Babagana Zulum, that the market was shut five years ago, for serving as a notorious hub allegedly used by insurgents and their logistics suppliers.

Prominent Nigerians, especially from the North, have also called for an independent probe.

Our correspondents, who visited the hospital on Monday, heard residents express fears that the death toll may rise, considering the degree of injuries sustained by the survivors.

Narrating his experience, a victim, Mustapha Bukar, said the airstrike occurred while traders were engaged in their daily activities.

“We were conducting our normal business activities in the market when I heard the sound of fighter jets hovering in the sky. When I looked up, I saw three jets.

“Suddenly, there was a loud explosion, followed by gunfire from the jets. My neighbor was killed instantly and I was shot in the leg.

“We thought the jets had left after the first strike, but to our surprise, they returned and kept shooting. People started running to safety, but the jets continued pursuing and attacking them.

“I later found myself in the hospital. My biggest concern now is that I don’t know whether my son, who was in the market, is alive or dead,” he said.

Another victim, Bha Bunu, who is currently in a wheelchair, said he lost his goods and sustained injuries.

“The airstrike was like rainfall; bullets were everywhere. People were running to save their lives. A woman was standing at my stall buying beans when the attack started.

“I don’t know what happened to her. I sustained a gunshot wound and a fracture in my left leg. My stall and goods were completely destroyed.

“We want the government to verify what happened and take concrete action. This was one of the most unjust strikes against local traders,” he said.

Fatima Banah, a visitor at the market, said she lost two of her children in the attack.

“I came to the market with my children to sell groundnuts and sesame seeds. My son stayed with me, while my daughter went to buy chicken.

“Suddenly, I saw three jets in the sky and heard a loud explosion. I don’t remember what happened afterwards. I only woke up in the hospital. When I asked about my children, I was told their bodies had been found,” she said.

Military sources stated that the jets were tracking suspected insurgents who had reportedly visited the market to collect levies and obtain supplies.

### **Boko Haram collects levies from us – Traders**

A 67-year-old trader, Modu Yusuf, confirmed that insurgents frequently collected taxes from the traders.

“They collect taxes from us, though not every week, sometimes once or twice a month. On the day of the incident, I saw them in the market on motorcycles.

“They also buy food and eat there. We are not security personnel, so we cannot stop them,” he said.

Another trader, Malam Ahmed Geidam, also confirmed the presence of insurgents but denied any collaboration.

“Yes, Boko Haram members come to the market and collect levies of N200 or N500 from each trader, depending on their mood. But this is happening in many markets, not just Jilli.

“They move freely with weapons, buy goods, and pay for them. They don’t harm anyone unless they suspect you are collaborating with the security forces.

“We are not terrorists. They use us as shields. Whenever security forces pursue them, they enter into our markets or hospitals for cover,” he said.

Geidam urged the government to target insurgents directly by dismantling their camps, supply chains, and economic activities.

### **‘Market reopened 2 years ago’**

Bukar Adamu, another victim, explained that the market had been closed for years due to insecurity before it was reopened about two years ago.

“The market was closed for about three years due to Boko Haram attacks. We only resumed activities after we were encouraged by other traders to return to business in the market,” he said.

Malam Bukar Goni, who was receiving treatment at the Specialists Hospital, Maiduguri, said he went to the market to buy goats when the aircraft arrived.

“The incident happened about Magrib time, when the market was about to close. Suddenly, jets arrived and were hovering over the market. We thought they were providing security cover for us, when suddenly they started shooting indiscriminately.

“A lot of people died from the shootings and the commotion that followed it, while others sustained varying degrees of injuries. I don’t know how I was able to survive. I just regained

consciousness and found myself on a hospital bed with multiple injuries,” Goni said.

He stated that the market deals in livestock, food and vegetables, adding that there is no single house within the vicinity where the incident happened.

Also speaking from his bed at the Specialists Hospital, Maiduguri, Bulama Balo, said he was about to leave at the end of the market day, when he saw three jets hovering in the sky over the market.

He said, “Within minutes of their arrival, they started shooting indiscriminately, completely burning the market in the process.

“They killed over 100 people during the attack. Some of us were just lucky to escape to the neighbouring communities, from where we were brought to this hospital here in Maiduguri.”

### **Jilli market location**

While the Jilli market was said to fall under the Gubio LGA of Borno State, multiple sources stated that the Jilli village is located in Futchimiram ward of Geidam LGA of Yobe State.

The Chairman of Geidam LGA, Musa Muhammad, stated that the market is actually located in Gubio LGA of Borno State.

“While we acknowledge that most of the victims are from Yobe State, the Jilli Market falls under Gubio LGA of Borno State. But as you know, people have the right to move freely and conduct their businesses anywhere,” he said.

### **Tinubu debriefs security chiefs**

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu on Monday held a security meeting with Service Chiefs and the Inspector-General of Police at the Presidential Villa, Abuja.

The meeting, which started at about 2:30 pm, followed the president's return to Abuja after visiting Plateau, Ogun, Lagos and Bayelsa State.

President Tinubu consoled the people of Plateau over the attack on the Rukuba area of the state.

Among those who attended the meeting were the National Security Adviser, Mallam Nuhu Ribadu; the Chief of Defence Staff, General Olufemi Oluyede; the Chief of Army Staff, Lieutenant General Waidi Shaibu; the Chief of Air Staff, Air Marshal Sunday Aneke; the Director-General of the Department of State Services, Mr. Adeola Oluwatosin Ajayi and the Inspector-General of Police, Olatunji Disu.

Presidency sources said the meeting might not be unconnected with the Jilli market incident and other related security matters.