

ISWAP Commander killed in Borno as U.S. sanctions eight Nigerians over links to B'Haram, cybercrime

By : [Johnson Eyiango](#)

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Nigeria defence Headquarters

The Defence Headquarters (DHQ) has announced the arrival of about 100 United States military personnel and associated equipment at Bauchi Airfield.

[This followed the killing of a senior commander of the Islamic State West Africa Province \(ISWAP\)](#) by the Nigerian military, identified as Abou Aisha, as they foiled multiple terrorist attacks at Pulka and Mandaragirau on February 14, 2026, in Borno.

Spokesman for Operation Hadin Kai (OPHK), Lt-Col Sani Uba, confirmed the killing of the ISWAP commander in a statement yesterday.

Meanwhile, the U.S. has frozen the assets and properties of eight Nigerians accused of having links to the Islamic sect, Boko Haram, and ISWAP. This was contained in a 3,000-page document dated February 10, released by the U.S. Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) and sighted by the correspondent The Guardian yesterday.

The Director Defence Information (DDI), Maj-Gen Samaila Uba, the arrival of the U.S. troops, in a statement yesterday, confirmed the personnel as technical specialists serving strictly in an advisory and training capacity and

not combat forces.

According to the DDI, all training activities will be conducted under the authority, direction and control of the Nigerian government and in close coordination with the Armed Forces of Nigeria (AFN).

He said Nigerian troops, alongside the advisers, would commence a series of joint training engagements and intelligence-focused cooperation initiatives.

The activities, he added, are designed to enhance the capacity of Nigerian troops to effectively identify and neutralise extremist terrorist groups seeking to destabilise the nation.

Uba assured that the AFN remained fully committed to degrading and defeating terrorist organisations that threaten the country's sovereignty, national security and the safety of its citizens.

He explained that the deployment formed part of the deliberation during a working group engagement by the Nigerian delegation and its U.S. counterpart.

The DHQ said the arrival of the troops was planned and deliberate following a formal request by the Abuja to Washington to support a clearly defined military training requirement, technical support and intelligence sharing with the members of AFN.

On the killing of the ISWAP chief, he added: "Credible intelligence indicates that the terrorists suffered severe casualties, including a senior commander identified as Abou Aisha, who sustained a critical gunshot injury to the neck leading to his death alongside significant losses of weapons and equipment."

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He explained that the troops decisively thwarted coordinated terrorist attacks in Pulka and Mandaragirau, as the insurgents sought to overrun defensive positions in both locations.

"Also, on the same night, a large group of suspected BHT/ ISWAP terrorists advanced from the Sambisa Forest axis and launched a fierce attack on troops of Sector 1 in Pulka. In a well-coordinated response, troops engaged the terrorists in an intense firefight, successfully containing and reversing the assault.

"Although a section of the perimeter was briefly breached, leading to the destruction of some combat enablers and accommodation, impressively, swift reinforcement with overwhelming firepower from 26 Brigade forced the terrorists to retreat in disarray towards the Sambisa axis," he said.

The U.S. document also identified individuals sanctioned for cybercrime-related offences and other security threats.

The pronouncement comes on the heels of recent recommendations by the U.S. Congress for visa bans and asset freezes on persons and groups accused of violation of religious freedom and persecution of Christians in Nigeria.

Former governor of Kano State, Rabi'u Kwankwaso; the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN); and Miyetti Allah Kautal Hore were recommended by U.S. lawmakers for visa bans and asset freezes.

The OFAC document, entitled 'Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List', detailed individuals of other nationalities and entities whose assets had been frozen, serving as a reference tool.

It also provided notice of actions taken against Specially Designated Nationals (SDNs), whose property and interests were blocked as part of counter-terrorism efforts.

According to OFAC, the move forms part of its broader efforts to block the property and interests of SDNs and prevent financial dealings with them.

Among those listed is Salih Yusuf Adamu, also known as Salihu Yusuf, identified as having ties with Boko Haram and who was reported to hold a Nigerian passport. He was among six Nigerians convicted in 2022 for setting up a Boko Haram cell in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to raise funds for insurgents in Nigeria. The six men were convicted in the UAE for attempting to send \$782,000 from Dubai to Nigeria.

Another individual, Babestan Oluwole Ademulero, was designated under SDNTK sanctions. He appeared under several aliases, including Wole A. Babestan and Olatunde Irewole Shofeso. Abu Abdullah ibn Umar Al-Barnawi, also known as Ba Idrisa, was flagged under terrorism-related sanctions.

Khaled (or Khalid) Al-Barnawi, whose name appeared twice in the publication, was linked to Boko Haram and listed under several aliases, including Abu Hafsat and Mohammed Usman. Ibrahim Ali Alhassan was reported to reside in Abu Dhabi and was linked to Boko Haram. Abu Bakr ibn Muhammad ibn Ali Al-Mainuki, also known as Abu-Bilal Al-Minuki, was identified as having ties to ISIL.

Nnamdi Orson Benson was listed under CYBER2 sanctions and was reported to hold a Nigerian passport.

The sanctions mean that all property and interests of these individuals within U.S. jurisdiction are blocked, and Americans are generally prohibited from engaging in transactions with them.