

Seven soldiers, civilian feared killed in Lakurawa Sokoto ambush

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By Animashaun Salman

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At least seven soldiers and a civilian were feared killed after suspected Lakurawa terrorists ambushed troops of Operation Fasan Yamma at Runji village in Illela Local Government Area of Sokoto State.

The attack reportedly occurred on Saturday evening as the soldiers were returning from a military offensive against a suspected Lakurawa hideout near the border community.

Local sources said the troops had earlier carried out a successful raid on the terrorists' camp using three military vehicles, inflicting heavy casualties on the armed group before the ambush occurred.

A source familiar with the operation said one of the military vehicles developed a mechanical fault while the troops were heading back to their base in Illela, forcing some soldiers to stop and attempt repairs.



“The terrorists apparently regrouped after the attack on their camp and trailed the soldiers to retaliate,” the source said.

According to him, the attackers arrived on about 30 motorcycles, each carrying heavily armed fighters, and opened fire on the troops.

“They met the soldiers where the faulty vehicle was being repaired, and a fierce exchange of gunfire followed,” he added.

Another source, however, gave a different account, claiming the soldiers had abandoned the faulty vehicle and were trekking back to base with the assistance of a civilian familiar with the terrain when they ran into the ambush.

“The troops were moving back toward Illela with the help of a local guide when the terrorists attacked them. Seven soldiers and the civilian assisting them were killed,” the source said.

Residents of the area said six bodies were initially recovered at the scene, while the corpse of another soldier was discovered in a nearby bush the following day.

“We counted seven corpses altogether after the missing soldier’s body was later found,” a resident, who requested anonymity for security reasons, told our correspondent.

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Security sources confirmed that the bodies of the slain soldiers had been evacuated to Sokoto, while reinforcement teams had been deployed to the troubled area.

A government official in the locality also disclosed that one of the casualties was a senior military officer believed to be a lieutenant in the Nigerian Army.

Further details emerged on Monday as another military source revealed that the troops were responding to a distress call when the ambush occurred.

“The troops of Operation Fasan Yamma had just concluded a successful operation when they received a distress call and turned back,” the source said.

“They used one of the soldiers as bait, and on their way back, the troops were ambushed. Two officers, both lieutenants, were killed during the encounter,” he added.

When contacted, the spokesperson for the Sokoto State Police Command, DSP Ahmad Rufa’i, declined to comment on the incident. The Special Adviser to the Sokoto State Governor on Security Matters, Col Ahmed Usman (retd.), also did not comment.

However, a senior military officer confirmed that soldiers were killed during the operation, although he disputed the casualty figures being circulated.

“Yes, we recorded regrettable casualties over the weekend around Illela. Immediate tactical reinforcements have since been deployed, while intelligence-led operations are ongoing to track and neutralise the terrorists responsible,” the officer said.

“In line with military tradition, we cannot disclose the identities of our fallen heroes until their next of kin are duly notified.

“We urge the media to avoid unverified casualty figures and instead focus on the sacrifices and commitment of our troops,” he added.

The Lakurawa group has, in recent months, intensified attacks on communities across parts of Sokoto and Kebbi states, raising fresh concerns over worsening insecurity in the North-West region.