

“They opened fire and they shot at everyone who was running in panic. They killed five people. The dead included one of my daughters. There was a baby with us too, my granddaughter, who was two years old. She was wounded from the gunshot.”⁵⁴

Two Shuwa Arab women from Musari village, Marte LGA, said they fled in early 2016 after being forced to leave by the military.⁵⁵ One said “the army came to our village and all the surrounding ones and put fire to everything and told us that we had to leave. They did this to all the villages near us. I came with my eight children and my mother to Dikwa camp.”⁵⁶

Many IDPs interviewed reported that those killed in these attacks were disproportionately elderly people and people with disabilities who were less able to flee quickly. **38-year-old Musa** (not his real name), from Alamberi village, Marte LGA, told Amnesty International that in April 2016:

“We were in our village, the army came and told us that if we see Boko Haram passing through the village, we should call them. There was a checkpoint about 500 meters outside our village. Three days later, Boko Haram came and they started opening fire towards the checkpoint. Then they left. In response, the army came to Alamberi and opened fire [on residents]. Some of us escaped, but the elders who couldn’t escape were killed. Then the army burned the village. Later on, after two days, we came back to see what happened. We buried 15 bodies, most were elderly men and women, and four children under two years old.”⁵⁷

After this attack, Musa fled with his family to Monguno camp.

One official who was working with an international NGO in the north-east in 2016 also told Amnesty International that the military dropped leaflets across a number of affected LGAs in late 2015 and the first quarter of 2016 informing people that if they did not relocate to the capital of their LGA they would be subject to attack by the military.⁵⁸ Some IDPs reported hearing radio announcements ordering them to leave.

Thirty-year-old Halima (not her real name), from Kalu Kutu village in Bama LGA, told Amnesty International what happened after she and other people in her village chose not to flee to the recaptured towns but tried to remain after the military attacked and burnt their homes. She said that in December 2015:

“The Nigerian army went to our village, they started opening fire, and everybody started running into the bush. The army set fire to our houses and burned the town. We ran to the bush and stayed there. After three months, we came back to the village and we rebuilt our houses. After again three months, [around June 2016] the army came [again]. We all ran. The army killed two people then, a 70-year-old man, and a 20-year-old man with a disability. And they burned the town. We made the burial of those two and then we walked for three days to Banki camp.”⁵⁹

International humanitarian organizations have raised concerns that the Nigerian authorities’ military operations have been associated with a number of protection concerns, and that the campaign has “limited the supply of food and goods to civilians remaining in hard-to-reach areas”, with the result that people who tried to remain behind “are cut off from basic services and humanitarian assistance”.⁶⁰

While most of the IDPs interviewed had travelled to the recaptured towns on their own, some said they were taken by soldiers. This included five who were picked up in their village by soldiers during military operations; nine who approached the military asking for protection in other locations, such as at checkpoints on main roads; and 20 who tried to flee to Cameroon but were intercepted by Cameroonian soldiers on the way or in villages inside Cameroon.

Twenty-eight-year-old Fanna (not her real name), from Dipchari village in Bama LGA, told Amnesty International that the military took her to Bama Hospital camp against her will.

Fanna said that, while some people in her village had fled to the satellite camp in Banki in late 2015 fearing attack by the military if they did not, she and others remained in Dipchari as they had also “heard reports that the soldiers were killing and detaining lots of ordinary people” in Banki.⁶¹ She said that several months later the military came to Dipchari; they opened fire, killing three men running away, and burned all their homes down. However, even after this attack, she and scores of others chose to remain in Dipchari and rebuild. She told Amnesty International that she and a group of other women from her village were on their

⁵⁴ Amnesty International interview, September 2016.

⁵⁵ Amnesty International interview, September 2017.

⁵⁶ Amnesty International interview, September 2017.

⁵⁷ Amnesty International interview, December 2016.

⁵⁸ Amnesty International interview, September 2016.

⁵⁹ Amnesty International interview, November 2016. Names of the two men reported killed are on file with Amnesty International.

⁶⁰ Humanitarian Response Plan 2018 for Nigeria, December 2017, reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2018_hrp_v5.4.pdf.

⁶¹ Amnesty International interview, March 2018.