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FIGHTER JET KILLS 5 CIVILIANS, INJURES MANY 'IN ERROR'

Category: **News** Published on Friday, 21 March 2014 05:00

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Five civilians were killed late Wednesday in Kayamla village of Konduga LGA of Borno State when a military fighter jet targeting suspected Boko Haram members dropped an explosive on a village.

Many civilians were injured by shrapnel and are receiving treatment at the University of Maiduguri Teaching Hospital (UMTH), Daily Trust learnt yesterday.

Residents of Kayamla said before the aerial operation, there was a stand-off between Boko Haram insurgents and soldiers in the area.

It was gathered that the insurgents were regrouping at a nearby primary school to attack Maiduguri.

Insurgents have reportedly been making efforts to enter the state capital after a failed attempt last week.

"On Wednesday they mobilised again at the primary school in Kayamla and along the line, the military heard the plan and engaged them," a farmer in Kayamla said.

But a resident who witnessed the incident told the BBC Hausa radio that the military jet shelling on the village came three days after unknown people dropped a letter of an intended attack on a military barracks in the area.

"Soldiers in a plane were the ones who attacked us," he said in answer to a question on how they knew who the attackers were.

"They killed people and burnt the village. People were at the motor park when the aircraft came in the night. They instantly started firing and bombed the entire area."

Though there is no formal statement from the police or the army on the incident, sources said night air operation has remained a problem for the army and the air force in the restive states of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe.

"The major problem is that we don't have aircraft that can fight at night because the ones available have poor vision facilities. This is significantly why we are witnessing cases of killing civilians during aerial reconnaissance," a source said.

"Once it is dark, the pilot can only make estimates and drop arsenal when there is substantial information that the terrorists are not close to civilians and in cases like this, you cannot rule out mistakes."

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