

# Soldiers kick B/Haram out of Damasak, kill 300

**About 300 Boko Haram militants were killed while 10 Chadian soldiers died in fighting to take control of Malam Fatouri and Damasak in Borno State from Boko Haram.**

It was the first gains against the militants in a joint military offensive launched with Niger at the weekend, military sources in Niger said yesterday.

Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Benin have mobilized forces to help Nigeria defeat the group after it seized large amounts of territory and staged cross-border attacks.

But 30 Nigerien and Chadian soldiers were wounded in the clashes over the two cities a day after thousands of troops crossed the border

to seize areas held by the terrorist group. A Chadian officer, who asked not to be named, said about 10 Chadian soldiers were killed and 20 were wounded in fighting for the towns. There was no official comment from Chad's army.

"We have kicked the enemy out of these areas and they are now under our control," a Niger military source said.

The advancing troops had seized large quantities of arms and ammunition as well as vehicles, he said, and were undertaking a clean-up operation in the area. "The troops have taken dozens of Boko Haram elements prisoner," he added.

Damasak is 10 km (6 miles) south of the

Niger border, where Nigerian and Chadian troops had been massing in recent weeks before the offensive.

A medical source in Diffa in Niger Republic said 30 wounded soldiers had been admitted to the town's hospital. There was no official confirmation of the toll and it was not possible to verify the figure.

"We had permission from Nigeria for this action," the source said. There was no immediate comment from Nigeria, which has launched its own offensive against the militants.

Nigeria and its neighbours have been working to pull together plans and rules of engagement for a regional force of 8,700 troops. (Reuters)

