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53 killed as Airforce jet bombs IDP camp in Borno

By Omirin Olatunji, Ibrahim Sawab (Maiduguri) & Isiaka Wakili (Abuja) | Publish Date: Jan 18 2017 2:00AM

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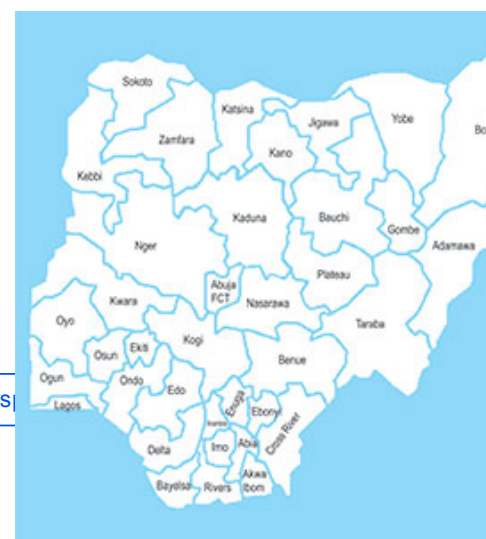
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Nigerian military jet killed 53 humanitarian aid workers and internally displaced persons, injuring 100 others when it accidentally bombed an IDPs camp in Rann, Borno state yesterday.

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53 killed as Airforce jet bombs IDP camp in Borno

Military officials and rescue workers said the incident occurred when an Air Force fighter jet erroneously fired at civilians and troops in the IDPs camp located at Kala Balge local government area of the state.

The Theatre Commander of Operation Lafiya Dole, Major General Lucky Irabor confirmed during a press conference that some locals were killed in the cause of the operations in Kala Balge.

Hospital sources said that the International Community of Red Cross (ICRC) have air lifted some of their staff to the tactical ward at Specialist Hospital, Maiduguri and they brought them in at about 7:30 pm as wounded civilians are currently receiving treatment at both hospitals.

Sources said both the University of Maiduguri Teaching Hospital and the Specialists Hospital were overwhelmed.

The Nigerian Army earlier yesterday said its fighter jet misfired and shot some humanitarian aids of ICRC, Medicine San Frontiers (Doctors without borders) and some civilians in Kala-Balge.

Major General Irabor said “we got information that the Boko Haram insurgents are regrouping and air operations were coordinated and conducted.

“Our air component carried out operations at gathering of Boko Haram element unfortunately; we got reports that some civilian, two soldiers, official MSF and ICRC were killed. We are sending helicopter to evacuate those who are wounded.”

He said the civilians were not the target, saying: “We are not intended to target civilian where they gathered. We can’t ascertain the casualty figure so far, it is disturbing, as far as we are concerned because lives have been taken and many wounded.”

A humanitarian worker who was not authorized to speak on the issue said the air bombardment in Rann is worrisome.

He said “The reports we got from Rann is worrisome dozens of civilians were killed, in fact ICRC tents were destroyed. Many were said to have been in critical condition as evacuation is to be done.”

The Communication officer of ICRC Maiduguri Sub- delegation, Mr. Umar Sadiq said the “Red Cross is strictly concerned about reported causality among civilians and humanitarian workers after today’s airstrike on Rann, Northeast. We are in contact with relevant authority to organize medical assistance and evacuation, and also to get more information on the situation in Rann.”

Attack shocking, unacceptable - MSF

The Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) said at least 120 people were wounded and 52 killed in Nigerian military jet attack on the internally



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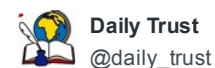
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displaced people camp.

"This large-scale attack on vulnerable people who have already fled extreme violence is shocking and unacceptable, displaced-people-rann," says Dr Jean-Clément Cabrol, MSF Director of Operations.

"The safety of civilians must be respected. We are urgently calling on all parties to ensure the facilitation of medical evacuations by air or road for survivors who are in need of emergency care," he said.

The international, medical humanitarian organisation said its medical teams are currently "providing first aid to wounded patients in our facility in Rann. Other MSF medical and surgical teams in the region are also preparing to treat evacuated patients."

Shettima orders emergency response

Borno state Governor Kashim Shettima has ordered emergency response in all public hospitals at the state capital Maiduguri, according to a statement by his spokesperson Isa Gusau last night.

Buhari regrets bombing

President Muhammadu Buhari expressed sadness over the accidental bombing in a statement by his spokesperson Femi Adesina.

The president condoled with the families of the deceased, and wished the wounded divine succour.

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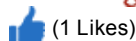
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