


Boko Haram overrun military base in Yobe, soldiers missing

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Over six hundred soldiers are still missing after suspected Boko Haram militants overran a military base in Yobe State on Saturday, credible sources told Daily Trust yesterday.

Many Boko Haram militants dressed in military apparel and armed with sophisticated weapons got access to a military facility in Jillli, a village in Yobe State close to the border with Borno State in the fringes of Lake Chad.

One of the sources said before the invasion, the base had around 750 troops manning it, adding that the facility was established to contain the movement of Boko Haram terrorists' along the Chad Basin.

The Geidam area which shares border with Niger Republic has many cells under the control of the Abu Mus'ab Albarnawi faction of the Boko Haram which has ties with the Islamic State in West Africa (ISWAB).

“About 100 of the troops that disappeared from the base in Jilli after the clash have reported in Geidam town but very few of them had their weapons with them,” the source said.

He said over 600 had not been accounted for but expressed optimism that they might have taken cover somewhere and would soon surface.

“The soldiers manning the military facility took over two hours, from around 6.20pm till around 9pm, fighting hundreds of Boko Haram militants, who eventually overran the facility,” he said.

Jilli village is located 60km from Gaidam, the headquarters of Gaidam local Government of Yobe State.

A top military source said, “Yes, the 81 Division Forward Brigade in Jilli was overran by the terrorists and some of our men ran to Geidam for reinforcement...Everything is now under control,” he said.

When asked about the casualty figures, he said, “It’s too early to ascertain, but there must be casualty from both sides.”

A soldier who survived the attack told our correspondent that the terrorists went to the military facility in fleet of military painted vehicles with camouflage colours.

“There was trench around the base, but they confidently approached the gate and we opened it thinking they were troops from Gubio. They started shooting and we engaged them before they overran us,” he said.

“About 10 of us ran to Ngilewa village where a Good Samaritan drove us to Damakarwa village and handed us to the troops from Geidam,” he said.

He said most of the troops were newly deployed to the brigade, and therefore not accustomed to the terrain. “I cannot say anything about the casualties but the attack was fatal,” he added.

Modu Grema, a driver from the area, said they rescued 53 soldiers and one vigilante who sustained bullet wound on his leg.

“I was sleeping when 13 soldiers knocked at my door. Initially, I refused to open the door because of the gunshots that enraged the military location. When I opened, 13 soldiers asked me to drive them to Geidam, in fact they insisted.

“I picked my car keys and drove them to Damakarwa village under intense fear because I would have been dead by now if we mistakenly cross paths with the insurgents,” he said.

Goni Baana, a farmer in Gubio Local Government Area of Borno State who is now in Maiduguri, said many of the soldiers that left Jilli at night crossed to Gwala village where they passed the night.

“From what I gathered, our people in Gwala led them to a base in Gubio town in the morning,” he said