

Boko Haram kills 30 soldiers, sack Borno village

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About 30 soldiers have been killed in a battle with Boko Haram insurgents at Zari, a border settlement with Niger Republic in Borno State, about 30 kilometres from Damasak, the headquarters of Mobbar Local Government Area.

Sources said the insurgents stormed the village at about 4:30pm on Thursday but the information emerged Saturday.

Although army sources gave the number of soldiers killed as 30 while 20 sustained serious wounds, civilian JTF and other sources told to Daily Trust on Sunday that an estimated 40 soldiers were killed.

The sources said the insurgents sacked the entire village.

An army source confirmed to Daily Trust on Sunday that troops suffered heavy casualties and that the insurgents carted away weapons abandoned by fleeing troops.

After a gun battle that lasted a few hours, the army source said, soldiers fled into bushes before a fighter jet arrived to save the situation.

“We lost many soldiers in the duel and many of them are still missing because they are yet to return to the Damasak base. We equally lost weapons to the attackers,” the source said.

In a statement late Friday the Nigerian military confirmed troops fought Boko Haram “insurgents...on rampage to loot the community and extort money from villagers.

“Troops...have successfully routed Boko Haram insurgents in an encounter that ensued yesterday evening at Zari village,” the military said in the statement.

It did not speak of military casualties and the raid on the base but maintained “several Boko Haram fighters and weapons” were destroyed in the fight.

Boko Haram has intensified attacks on military targets in recent months.

The attacks appear to undermine repeated claims by the military that Boko Haram had been defeated.

The Nigerian army has on several occasions disputed reports on losses to Boko Haram and has in some cases played them down.

On July 14 Boko Haram militants overran a military base in Jillli village, in neighbouring Yobe State when dozens of troops were said to have been killed, wounded or missing.