

Army goes after traitors as B/Haram strikes again

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Theater Commander, Operation Lafiya Dole, Maj.-Gen. Olusegun Adeniyi, addresses troops of the 5 Battalion stationed at Gubio and Magumeri towns, during his visit to the Battalion in Gubio, Borno State yesterday, where he ordered them to take the fight to Boko Haram enclaves

- **9 abducted women return, 12 still missing**

The Theatre Commander of Operation Lafiya Dole, Maj. Gen. Olusegun Adeniyi, yesterday asked the troops fighting the Boko Haram to look out for traitors in the ongoing war against insurgency.

This is even as four persons were killed and 12 others missing when suspected Boko Haram insurgents attacked Gajiram, the headquarters of Nganzai Local Government Area of Borno State at the weekend.

A D V E R T I S E M E N T

Vigilante sources said the attackers also burnt some vehicles belonging to the local government authority and carted away foodstuffs.

It was also learnt that nine women who had been abducted during the siege escaped and returned yesterday, while 12 others were still missing.

“They (Boko Haram) came at about 8:30pm and started shooting sporadically. Four people were killed including an old woman. Initially, they forcefully took away 21 women but nine escaped,” a credible source told the Daily Trust yesterday.

“We have since buried the victims according to the Islamic rites; we still hope those in captivity will soon return,” the source said.

He said the incident had been reported to the military “and they are still searching for the missing women.”

Addressing troops in Gubio and Magumeri, the two towns in northern Borno that came under attack last week, Gen. Adeniyi told them to “hold your grounds” as they could be moved from one base to another.

“So, it is an insult for you to be here and someone says there are no soldiers. What we have discussed, implement it. If you have any issues, let your commander know and look out for traitors, set up a checkpoint and be checking. If we don’t stop Boko Haram logistics, this war will never finish.

“Please, let us finish this war and go home. If you have been unserious, get serious; if you are serious, get more serious. You are in war today, you will be at peace in another unit tomorrow. Above all, we must make up our minds that we are ending this war,” he stated.

Adeniyi also appealed to the troops to respect all their partners, including the police and the civilian joint task force to enable them to get desired results in the counter-insurgency operation.

“Civilian JTF is our partner; if you are working with them, respect them and treat them well, they are our partners. You don’t attack your partners, be diplomatic with them. Also, police are your friends here, respect them, they are working with us, we all have a common enemy which is Boko Haram.

“I urge you to make up your mind to end this war. Like I said, your commanders have plans, help them to execute them. Please, I am counting on you; so, I want you to know that I appreciate you very deeply and I am trusting God no evil will happen to you,” he added.

He warned that any commander who failed to provide food and water to his soldiers would be punished accordingly.

“Nigeria is before Boko Haram, it will end and Nigeria will continue. That I am sure of. The entire country is behind you, you are not the rebel.”

A member of Gubio community, Modu Alhaji Fanami, told theatre commander they were trying their best by giving accurate information to the military.

“We are ready to do more to support soldiers because we still want to remain in Gubio, we have nowhere to go. All we want is to have soldiers around us; I can assure you that everyone of us is willing to support the troops,” he said.

‘Change of strategy responsible for setbacks’

Elsewhere, Governor Babagana Zulum of Borno State has said that the change of military strategy was responsible for the latest attacks by the Boko Haram insurgents.

Daily Trust had last week exclusively reported that the military had introduced what the top hierarchy called “Supercamps,” a situation whereby smaller military formations were collapsed to form one big formation.

Zulum spoke to State House reporters after a meeting with President Muhammadu Buhari at the State House Abuja on Friday.

The governor said the establishment of supercamps by the military, leading to the closure smaller camps gave upper hand to the insurgents.

Describing the decision as unwise, the governor said that the absence of military in some places could create serious problem.

“Well, the most important thing is that there is ongoing military strategy, according to the military authorities, what they called establishment of ‘supercamps’ that entails that all other smaller units in various villages and towns, shall be collapsed to form part of the supercamps in some critical major local government areas.

“In our thinking as laymen not as military personnel, we thought this decision is not wise. We must ensure there is military presence in all the locations. We are very much aware of their numerical strength but nonetheless, their absence can create serious vacuum and that has informed the recent attacks,” he said.

“However, I heard that the military is now trying to re-establish the military formations in those areas and that they should not form part of the supercamps,” he said.

Zulum said the civilian JTF were working but that they lacked heavy weapons needed to conveniently face the insurgents.

“So, the absence of the Nigerian military in a particular place will create a vacuum in such a way that the civilian JTF and hunters cannot perform effectively. I have told Mr. President and he has listened to our complaints; he has done a lot for the people of Borno State and it is our sincere hope that this time around, he will take necessary steps to forestall future occurrence.

“But most importantly, the presence of the Nigerian military in almost all the locations especially in local government headquarters, need not be overemphasized,” he said.

To succeed in the fight against Boko Haram, the governor said the root causes of the insurgency which are not limited to endemic poverty, pervasive illiteracy, financial and economic hardship, unemployment, environmental degradation, drug abuse among others must be addressed.

“We must ensure our youths are employed. We shall support the Nigerian police and the Nigerian military, most importantly the gallant civilian JTF and the hunters to ensure that the remnants of Boko Haram are eliminated,” he said.

On the present situation in Gubio and Magumeri, the governor said: “Well, I don’t want to go into much detail but as far as I am concerned, there was an attack in Gubio and Magumeri, local government areas. Secretariats were burnt down,

health centres were burnt down, vehicles were burnt down, communication gadgets were burnt down.

“It is disheartening to note that since the advent of this administration, burning of secretariats and other public buildings ceased for the last four and a half years. What must have informed this decision for them to resume these attacks? These questions remain unanswered. Most importantly, I am sure this government has done a lot and the discussions I had with Mr. President shows that we are getting to an end very soon and I am optimistic that we shall get enough support.

“Right now, we are receiving support from Mr. President but we are only appealing that the system be strengthened, for him to look into the porosity of the system, evaluate the system with a view to enhancing it,” he said.

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