

# Tears as army commander killed by B/Haram IED buried in Abuja

By Idowu Isamotu

An army commander, Col. Hussein Samaila Sankara, killed by the explosive device planted by Boko Haram terrorists in Borno State, was buried in Abuja yesterday.

Sankara, interred at the Guards Brigade Cemetery amid tears and emotions, died on July 1, 2021 in Abuja due to complications from injuries sustained in the North East when his vehicle stepped on landmines on May 30, 2021.

Many soldiers had also been killed in the line of duties across the country.

It would be recalled that at least seven soldiers of the Nigerian Army had died instantly after the incident and four other soldiers, including Sankara, were severely injured.

Sankara, alongside 10 others, was said to be travelling from Marte, a town in Borno State, to the state capital, Maiduguri.

His relations, colleagues and friends, who attended the funeral service at the military church at Mogadishu Cantonment in Abuja, recalled their last moments with him and paid glowing tributes to him.

His elder brother, Shehu Jafiya,

told reporters after the burial, that Sankara had told his family that his mission was accomplished "not knowing he was talking about his mission on planet earth."

Jafiya said the deceased would be happy to see an end to insurgency and ethnic agitations, and a united Nigeria.

He said: "After the blast in Borno State around Dikwa and Marte, he was first flown in a helicopter to Maiduguri where he was stabilized at the military facility, then they moved him to Cedar Crest Hospital in Abuja.

"I was at the airport to receive him and we had very extensive discussions not only one day, but progressively over a week. He kept assuring us that we should not cry or be too worried that he was going to be fine.

"We didn't know he just wanted to console us by saying we should not be too worried and not cry for him. My last moments with him were indeed emotional and painful to us.

"We thought he was referring to the mission in Borno. He was being very prophetic. So, we didn't understand him then. He was very committed to his family. When I mean both his wife, children and we the brothers. He

was easy-going and he had a very deep passion for the military job. He was so proud of it and that was why in the house, we christened him 'Sojaman'.

"One other thing he always treasured was his love for this nation. Whenever we sat to discuss, you would hear him saying that he would do anything for this country, Nigeria. All this while, we didn't understand what he was talking about. That he was ready to die for this country and it eventually manifested.

"The first thing that'll give him joy in heaven is for us to defeat this insurgency. He'll want to see his family settling down as quickly as possible so that they won't feel the pain of his exit too much just as the preacher said in the church."

Reading Sankara's citation at the graveyard, Col. Adebayo Lawal described him as an "articulate, dedicated, loyal and hard-working officer.

"He was calm, firm, but fair with a good sense of purpose and responsibility, he was a forthright gentleman and a professional intelligence officer who was genuinely committed to his duty. He had a remarkable conduct and overwhelming moral standard."

He said Sankara was of the Nigerian Army Intelligence Corps who rose to the rank of colonel on Sept 3, 2020.

"Before his demise, he was the psychological operator at the theatre command Operation Hadin Kai. He was until his demise, the Commanding Officer, Chief of Army Staff intervention battalion operations."

## Several attacks on soldiers

Daily Trust reports that scores of soldiers had been killed in the last few months in different circumstances ranging from banditry to kidnapping, armed robbery, insurgency, among others.

A Major was shot dead few days ago in an armed robbery incident in Jigawa State.

The Police Public Relations Officer, ASP Lawan Shisu Adam, who confirmed the incident, also said an army private was also killed.

He said the incident occurred at Dumdubus village in Dutse Local Government Area of the state around 9pm on Sunday.

According to Lawan, the two officers were travelling from Maiduguri, Borno State to Kaduna.



Representatives of the Nigerian Army presenting flag to Dall, son of Col Hussein Sankara who was killed by Boko Haram explosive in Borno State. With them are wife of the deceased, Joy and the elder brother, Shehu Jafiya during the burial in Abuja yesterday.

Photo: Felix Onigbinde