

Troops kill 50 ISWAP fighters in Borno

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No fewer than 50 Islamic State West African Province (ISWAP) commanders and fighters were killed during a counteroffensive by troops in Askira Uba Local Government Area of Borno State, the Nigerian Army said yesterday. It would be recalled that ISWAP fighters had on Saturday attacked a military Super Camp in Askira Uba but were reportedly repelled.

While the fight between the Nigerian troops and ISWAP was ongoing, some of the terrorists laid an ambush and killed the Commander 28 Task Force Brigade, Brig. Gen. Dzarma Zirkushu and three soldiers on their way to render support.

Spokesman of the Nigerian Army, Brig.-Gen. Onyema Nwachukwu, in a statement on Monday, explained that troops of 115 Task Force Battalion conducted dawn exploitation towards Leho village and environs.

Nwachukwu said, "Troops of Joint Task Force, North East Operation HADIN KAI have neutralised over 50 Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) terrorists and destroyed several of their combat equipment in a fierce counteroffensive in Askira Uba LGA of Borno State.

"In the counteroffensive, troops eliminated top commanders of ISWAP as well as foot soldiers. The gallant troops also unleashed massive destruction on the terrorists' Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicle and several gun trucks.

"It would be recalled, that 115 Task Force Battalion had an encounter with ISWAP terrorists in Askira Uba on 13 November 2021, during which the troops aggressively defended their location and followed up with a ferocious counter-attack.

"Unfortunately, the Commander 28 Task Force Brigade alongside three of his soldiers paid the supreme price, as they reinforced troops to defend the location.

"The equipment destroyed by troops include an MRAP vehicle and 11 gun trucks. The troops also recovered a large cache of arms and ammunition viz, five gun trucks, two anti-aircraft guns, five AK 47 rifles, one HK Machine



■ Flooded area of Ige road, Aburu in Iyana-Ipaja, Lagos after a rain on Sunday

Photo: NAN

Gun and one HK Machine Gun link.

"Relatedly, troops of 115 Task Force Battalion conducted a dawn operation towards Leho village and environs, where they discovered 3 corpses of the fleeing terrorists and also recovered 2,560 rounds of 7.62mm Special and 29 rounds of 7.62mm NATO ammunition abandoned by the terrorists," the statement said.

How troops achieved the feat

Daily Trust had on Sunday reported that after both the military and ISWAP fighters retreated from Askira Uba towards evening on Saturday, the terrorists went back at night.

"Luckily, the terrorists thought the military had completely vacated Askira Uba and environs but were wrong," a senior official said.

"That was when our own troops descended on them and dealt them a deadly blow. They would never succeed in their ill motive.

"The operation is ongoing simultaneously in the northern and southern parts of Borno," he said.

Some sources in Maiduguri and Abuja said the military establishment and by extension, the federal government were devastated by the death of General Zirkushu.

"Following the Saturday's terrible encounter at Askira Uba, more ground and air resources were immediately dispatched to confront the enemy," a colonel, who does not want to be named,

said.

Another source close to the military said the details of the aftermath of Saturday's encounter were being put together.

"The statement issued by the army spokesman is just part of what is going on. Officers and men of the armed forces are furious and several operations are ongoing.

"It is unusual to lose a general during war...What happened is sad. I know many things would change in the coming days.

"Also, we need not open up on what is happening but I can assure you that the terrorists are on the run," he said.

B/Haram fighters steal foodstuffs in Borno village

Suspected Boko Haram fighters loyal to late Abubakar Shekau yesterday burnt down houses and looted food items when they attacked Dille, a remote village at the fringe of Sambisa forest in Askira Uba Local Government Area.

It was learnt that the insurgents rode on six utility vehicles around 5 pm shooting sporadically.

A vigilante said they looted foodstuff before they burnt down shops in the village.

"They came shooting at all angles and there was a commotion in the village. We ran into bushes for safety. They emptied our shops before they set them ablaze. The soldiers responded on time and they left," he said.

The Deputy Speaker of the Borno State House of Assembly, Engr. Musa Abdullahi Askira, who

also confirmed the attack, said they entered the village in about six gun trucks. He said four houses and many shops were burnt.

A source said the terrorists were sighted converging with GTs and MC at Yuwe and Fulatari in Sambisa forest.

"Fulatari is located close to Sabil Huda. The convergence started at about 1 pm," he said.

Bandits kill 15 persons in Sokoto

Four communities in Sokoto State were invaded by bandits who killed 15 people on Sunday night, Daily Trust reports.

Governor Aminu Waziri Tambuwal also confirmed the killing while presenting his 2022 budget proposal to the State House of Assembly on Monday.

He told the legislators: "Let me start by condoling the people of Goronyo and Illela Local Government Areas over the last night's attacks by bandits who killed 12 persons in Illela and three persons in Goronyo.

Our correspondent report that Sokoto has been in the spotlight in recent months where bandits and sundry criminals have killed hundreds of people, forced many to become IDPs, destroyed villages and the economic fortunes of the locals.

While lamenting the development, Tambuwal said security challenges were hindering their efforts to develop the state.

He, however, assured that they would remain focused on providing security of lives and property in the state.

Speaking to Daily Trust, a member representing the Illela constituency at the state House of Assembly, Bello Isa Ambarura, said three communities were attacked by bandits in his area.

"It is indeed a calamity. The situation requires God's intervention. We have resorted to prayers," he said.

The communities attacked by the marauders in Illela included Runji, Kalmalo and Munwadata.

According to the member, the bandits also abducted several people.

The Chairman of Goronyo Local Government Area, Alhaji Abdulwahab Goronyo, said three persons were killed at a village called Kojiyo in the area.

He added that the bandits also kidnapped three women.

Zamfara community attacked for defaulting in levy payment

Reports from Zamfara State indicated that dozens of bandits stormed the Kwarin Mai Saje community in Tsafe Local Government Area of Zamfara State on Sunday.

Sources said the village was attacked because the residents could not pay a levy of N3 million imposed on them.

It was learnt that some women were raped and six people abducted.

"Foodstuff and other belongings of the villagers were also looted by the attackers," a resident of the village said.

Another said over 100 bandits laid siege on the village.

"They were over 100 in number and they came with sophisticated weapons. They did what wanted to do without any resistance from any quarter," he said.

"We are helpless; people cannot go to market or their farms and yet the bandits want you to give them money. Our prayer is that the federal government should do something to liberate us.

"The trend of raping our women is the height of onslaught against us. We need help," he said.

There was no statement from the state government and the police spokesperson, Mohammed Shehu, could not be reached.

Hundreds of villages have been sacked in Zamfara State and to a greater extent, the seizure of telecommunication in many places made it impossible for the locals to voice out their frustration.

Chencho wants autonomous region