

50 fighters, wives killed in B/Haram, ISWAP rival clashes

From Olatunji Omirin, Maiduguri.

Not fewer than 55 people including wives of the fighters of Boko Haram and their rival Islamic State of West African Province (ISWAP) have died in a week long multiple clashes in Borno State, sources said.

Our correspondent gathered that clashes started last week in one of the camps at Mutakinti general area in Bama Local Government Area of the state where about 11 fighters loyal to Boko Haram lost their lives in the encounter.

An impeccable source told *Daily Trust* that there was in-fighting dollar land in Sambisa forest last Saturday which claimed dozens including fighters and women.

The source added that ISWAP fighters outnumbered and overpowered Boko Haram and 11 fighters died in reprisal gun battles at Mantari general area.

Our correspondent learnt that

the clashes took place in Dollar Land in Sambisa forest, Mantari, and Mutakinti general areas all in Bama LGA as well as Bayan Dushai in Gwoza council.

While corroborating the account, Zagazola Makama, a counter insurgency expert and security analyst in the Lake Chad, said since December 3, a top Boko Haram leader in charge of Mandara Mountain, Ali Ngulde, had led hundreds of fighters armed with weapons from Mandara Mountain to wage war against the ISWAP in Sambisa Forest.

He said the attack began with a failed negotiation initiated by Boko Haram with its rival ISWAP that they were ready to surrender themselves to IS/ISWAP leadership.

Makama added that unknown to the ISWAP group, Ngulde and his team had staged an ambush in which at least 12 of them were killed in Yuwe while others escaped with bullet wounds.

In the aftermath of the encounters, Boko Haram members seized four Hilux trucks mounted with weapons belonging to their rivals and burnt another.

A source said that shortly after the victory, the Boko Haram fighters mobilised more fighters from Abu Ikilima's camp at Gaizuwa, Gabchari, Mantari and Mallum Masari to attack more ISWAP positions in Ukuba, Arra and Sabil Huda and Farisu, killing about 23 more fighters.

"The ISWAP group later retreated and took a position at the camp of Izzah. Thereafter, they moved to Garin Abbah located about 2 kilometres where they pinned down to wait for the Boko Haram.

"But instead of going to meet the ISWAP rivals to continue the fight, the Boko Haram elements made a detour and headed to where ISWAP wives were located and killed 33 of them," the source said.