

ISWAP Kills 2 Fishermen, Seizes Over 100 Canoes After Clash With B/Haram

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Islamic State West African Province (ISWAP) terrorists have killed two fishermen and seized over 70 fishing boats in the Lake Chad area in Borno State, victims of the attack and security sources have revealed to Daily Trust.

One of the security sources said the latest attacks were in Falinkime and Madangwiyya Island, in which the two fishermen from Kano and Bundaran in Doron Baga were killed on Wednesday morning.

“They shot the two fishermen dead. I saw over 40 people that were beaten to pulp by the insurgents in Daban Wanza and Tumun Barebari. They seized over hundred boats from the fishermen.

“They used speed boats in rounding up the fishermen’s canoes, merged them in one canoe and led them to the river bank. None of the fishermen made it out with even a single tool,” he said.

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One of those wounded, Malam Murtala, told our correspondent that they were first rounded up by Boko Haram fighters loyal to Abubakar Shekau, who handed a stern warning to them to stop paying royalty to ISWAP.

“They claimed to be the original owners of the area, not ISWAP, and that anybody that violates that would pay with his life. However, before they finished talking to us, the ISWAP fighters arrived and started shooting.

“All the fishermen, about 50 of us, dived into the lake to escape the clash, but two people were killed. Thank God I escaped alive though with a bullet lodged in my buttock, while another brushed my chin.

“Later on, the ISWAP said all the fishing canoes we left behind: almost 100 boats have been seized for being informants to security and aiding their members to escape and surrender to the military,” he said.

Murtala said dozens of insurgents were killed during the clash, adding that “The shooting continued after we left the place. I learnt that dozens of them died during the clash but the ISWAP have superior firearms.

Another witness, who escaped the attack unhurt but preferred to be named Garba, said the boats seized by the insurgents had kept over 2,000 fishermen in serious hardship.

He said the fishermen taxed by the ISWAP to fish in Tirigulla, Duguri, Kuyiram, Musaram and Kilma were all sacked.

“These are communities that produce at least one trailer per week. It’s the heart of fishing and farming in the Lake Chad area.

“For us that operate at the Lake Chad fringes of Monguno, Marte and Ngala, we paid the insurgents N40,000 for Taro (dredging nets fixture), giving them one-third of our daily catch and N3,000 per every Rothmans carton of fish loaded on a trailer to Maiduguri.

“They seized over 100 canoes, 5,000 Gura (Malian traps), dredging nets and gill nets that are worth millions of naira. They would tell you to drop everything, including your slippers and leave,” he said.

Garba said the insurgents have made fishing in the Lake Chad a feat for only those who dare, “but it’s the only occupation we have since childhood, and we have large families to feed. So, for many of us, it’s worth making sacrifices for.

“What happened today has taken us back several years in the progress we recorded in fishing here,” he said.

Another fisherman, Mamman Labo, said there were over 144 settlements in the Lake Chad area that had been annexed by the insurgents.

“Currently, we only have people in Doron Baga, Bundaram, Fish Dam in Kukawa and Wilgo in Ngala local government areas.

He called on the military to go beyond protecting their formations in the Lake Chad area and take the war to the insurgents.

“For many years, the military has been here, the Navy occupying the Fish Dam, while Baga, Bundaram and Wilgo are manned by the military, but without any advancement.

“We, the residents, are calling on the military to take the war to the insurgents and we will give them every support in taking the war to the insurgents. Because we don’t know how we can survive without fishing,” he said.