

Jihadists Capture Military Base In Borno, Says Source

• As Army Insists It Neutralised Terrorists

From Njadvara Musa, Maiduguri and agency report

ISLAMIC State West Africa Province (ISWAP) members, yesterday, took over a military base in Borno State after overnight clashes with troops.

It was learnt from sources that, overnight Friday into Saturday, machine-gun wielding fighters from ISWAP raided the Marte Town military base, taking over the base after overpowering the officers. The source could not give the casualty figure and the extent of damage on the camp and the jihadists.

"The priority now is to reclaim the base from the terrorists and an operation is underway. We took a hit from ISWAP terrorists. They raided the base in Marte after a fierce battle," the source said.

ISWAP, a splinter group from Boko Haram in 2016, has camps on islands in Lake Chad, meeting point of Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon and Chad.

The latest onslaught, it was gathered, was a follow up to last week's attempt to capture the base, when the ji-

hadists attacked the base but were repelled, leading to the mobilisation of more fighters for the overnight raid.

The source noted that the raid could be a counter attack, following the recent losses from troops' onslaught on ISWAP's second largest camp in Talala Village.

However, the Military High Command, in a statement, said it was the military that neutralised the jihadists in Marte through troops of Operation Tura Takaibango and the Air Task Force (ATF) of Operation Lafiya Dole.

The statement said seven gun trucks with which the terrorists attempted to attack a military post on Friday in the Marte/Dikwa axis were destroyed.

The Acting Director, Defence Media Operations, Brig-Gen. Bernard Onyeuko said: "The troops, based on credible information about the attack, positioned themselves at an ambush site.

They tactically withdrew and awaited arrival of the terrorists before they opened fire, killing several of them."