

Boko Haram seizes Shiroro, Rafi LGs in Niger

From Odita Sunday, Sodiq Omolayo (Abuja), Njadvura Musa (Maiduguri), AbdulGaniyu Alabi (Kaduna) and Joseph Wantu (Makurdi)

BOKO Haram terrorists have taken over five communities in Rafi and Shiroro local councils of Niger State, Secretary to the State Government (SSG), Alhaji Ahmed Matane, has disclosed.

In a chat with News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Minna, yesterday, he explained that the terrorists were fully in charge in Hanawanka and Madaka in Rafi as well as Kurebe, Gussau and Farina Kuka in Shiroro, forcing the rural dwellers to migrate to safer grounds.

According to the SSG, the terrorists move freely in the affected areas, wielding sophisticated and menacing weapons.

He added that the state has already notified security agencies for proper urgent security measures.

FOLLOWING the killing of Brig-Gen. Dzarma Zirkusu, and other soldiers in the line of duty, troops of Operation Hadin Kai (OPHK) have eliminated over 50 Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) terrorists and destroyed their combat equipment in Askira Uba Local Council of Borno State.

According to army spokesman, Brig-Gen. Onyema Nwachukwu, in the counter-offensive, troops eliminated commanders of ISWAP and foot soldiers. The gallant troops also unleashed massive destruction on the terrorists' Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicle and gun trucks.

The 115 Task Force Battalion had an encounter with ISWAP terrorists in Askira Uba on November 13, 2021, during which the Commander, 28 Task Force Brigade, and three of his soldiers paid the supreme price.

The Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Lt-Gen. Farouk Yahaya, on Sunday, led a team of army top brass to condole with the Zirkusu family.

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- Bandits ready to drop arms, says Gumi
- EFCC accuses NPOs of supporting terrorism
- Tiv, other Benue groups, LG bosses pledge to back security agencies

Zulum, has postponed the inauguration of projects to honour the fallen heroes.

Spokesman to the Governor, Isa Gusau, stated, yesterday, in Maiduguri that the commissioning of over 20 projects, including schools, health centres and other livelihood projects in nine councils, would have begun today.

"Instead of commissioning the projects today, the governor is visiting the families of late Zirkusu, who live outside the state to convey his deepest sympathy," he added.

MEANWHILE, Kaduna-based Islamic scholar, Sheikh Ahmad Gumi, has said that the present insecurity in the country, particularly banditry, can be history, as bandits will drop their arms, if education opportunities and other basic amenities are provided for Fulani herdsmen, at the grassroots.

He stated this on Sunday while on the inspection tour of Sheikh Uthman Bin Fodio Centre, a school built by Sheikh Gumi-funded Mosque Foundation Limited, at Kagarko Grazing Reserve,

near Kohoto Village.

Instead of spending billions of naira on military hardware to fight the bandits, Nigeria should spend such money on schools and teachers, he added.

The Islamic cleric stated, categorically, that he had spoken with the bandits and they expressed willingness to drop their arms and embrace peace, if their children could be given education and other social amenities.

HOWEVER, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has said that despite the humanitarian services provided by Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs) in the country, the sector is susceptible to the risk of terrorist financing.

Speaking at the maiden Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing (ML/TF) Risk Assessment of the NPOs sector, yesterday, in Abuja, the Chairman, Abdurashied Bawa, stated that the vulnerability of the sector had been a global concern, as it had been used to raise, move funds and provide logistics to terrorist

organisations.

Bawa lamented that the absence of a unified comprehensive regulatory framework for the sector remained a challenge that must be given priority.

THE three major socio-cultural groups in Benue state, including Mdzough U Tiv, Opiaktoha Idoma and Omni Ugese, with local councils chairmen in the state, have promised to support security agencies in the state to rid their domains of criminality.

The Chairman, Ukum Local Council, Steve Ayua, who read a speech on behalf of the chairmen and the groups during a press conference in Makurdi, yesterday, warned that they would no longer condone rascality in the state.

"We, on our part, are committed and ready to do all within our powers to support the security agencies to fish out the perpetrators of heinous crimes in our areas and prevent recurrence. A situation where our people live in perpetual fear of the unknown is unacceptable to us," they said.



Widow of Vanguard Newspapers reporter, Mrs. Deve Salem (left); her daughter, Havana; Chairperson, House of Representatives Press Corps, Mrs. Grace Ike and other members of the press corps, during their condolence visit to Salem's family, in Abuja...yesterday.

PHOTO: NAN