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40 killed, nine soldiers die as captured terrorists spark off fighting in Borno

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* Anxiety in Borno over Shetima's fate

*FG should declare total emergency in affected states

–Fasehun *Nigerians must unite against insurgency, says ACF

By **Ajibola Abayomi** (*Lagos*), **Stella Omona** (*Abuja*) and **Sunny Nwankwo**, (*Maiduguri*)

The arrest of a number of terrorists believed to be the ring leaders of those operating around Alagarmo, sparked off fighting in the outskirts of Bulanbuli, Borno State, the Defence Headquarters said on Friday.

Bulanbuli is between Alagarmo and Sambisa Forest where the terrorists have been attempting to establish a stronghold.

According to the military, over 40 terrorists died in the encounter while four soldiers lost their lives and nine wounded.

Also, more than 16 rifles and a substantial number of assorted ammunition, Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) materials, SIM Cards and electronic items were recovered.

According to the Director, Defence Information, Major

General Chris Olukolade, two of the terrorists were earlier arrested at a local market two days ago while trying to procure foodstuff while others were spying on the military base in the area.

Others still being trailed include a terrorist medic who was on a mission to procure drugs for use by his colleagues.

Meanwhile anxiety is still mounting in Borno State on whether Governor Kashim Shettima should be replaced with military administrator due to the wave of insecurity just as the founder of Oodua Peoples Congress (OPC), Dr Frederic Fasheun, has advocated total emergency rule in Yobe, Adamawa and Borno states.

Disturbed by the continued onslaught of Boko Haram, the OPC leader in an interview with *Saturday Independent* said “the way out is for the government to suspend governors in the affected states and declare full emergency rule in the states.

“The Federal Government should appoint administrators and competent security chief to man the affected states and annex every available might to save innocent citizens before the insurgents spread their tentacles to other parts of the country.”

However, prominent citizens in Borno State have vowed to resist any attempt to scuttle democratic process through emergency rule.

This is even as top Government officials and key stakeholders in the state have expressed their opposition to the extension of the emergency rule.

It would be recalled that the state of emergency in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states was declared May last year for six months and was subsequently extended by another six months which ended last week, precisely on April 17.

The issue has been dominating discussions in the state since last week. Members of All Progressives Congress (APC) in the state are now jittery especially with the exclusion of the three governors in the affected states from the Security Council meeting convened few days ago by President Goodluck Jonathan.

A former governorship candidate of Peoples' Democratic Movement (PDM), Comrade Zanna Shettima, said that any attempt by the Federal Government to appoint military administrator to unseat a democratically elected governor will amount to gross breach of democratic process.

Zanna who was also former Chairman of Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) in Borno State, argued "first and foremost, the emergency rule in the three states had been unproductive. It has not yielded any positive result."

He said that, those who said the emergency rule was a ploy by the Federal Government to disenfranchise some sections of the north might be right.

"For over a year now, the military had been on ground in Borno State under the operation of emergency rule, but their performance could not bring succour to the people, instead it has worsened the situation," he said.

Also, one Mallam Ahmed Musa, a teacher in one of the schools in the state regretted that the emergency rule could better be described as a complete failure.

"Since the emergency rule did not work, is it when a military administrator take over the state that the war against Boko Haram would be won?" he asked.

In his opinion, a cleric with the Living Faith Church in Maiduguri, Pastor Gideon, urged Nigerians, irrespective of religious affiliations, to pray for God's intervention on the protracted insurgency.

The apex northern political group, Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF), however, appealed to all Nigerians irrespective of religion or political afflictions to unite against the insurgency.

The National Publicity Secretary of ACF, Anthony Sani, in a telephone interview urged Nigerians to corporate with the Federal Government in its effort to put an end to the menace of insecurity occasion by Boko Haram

"Our fear is that politicians are politicising security matters, the wanton destruction is not doing anyone any good so we must all unite against Boko Haram as a common enemy."