

# COAS: Mass Retirement Not Contemplated In Military — DHQ

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The Defence Headquarters (DHQ) on Thursday unequivocally stated that the military high command was not contemplating mass retirement of senior officers following the appointment of Major General Farouk Yahaya as Chief of Army Staff (COAS).

The high command, however, said that senior officers are free to stay in service or retire voluntarily, if they so desire.

Brigadier General Bernard Onyeuko, Director, Defence Media Operations (DDMO), who conveyed this position to newsmen in Abuja, while briefing on the successes of military operations across the country, said the clarification became necessary following the rumour of planned mass retirement.

The rumour is not connected with the fact that the new COAS was appointed well ahead of his seniors in the military.

General Onyeuko in his brief said, "At this point you are all aware of the appointment of the new Chief of Army Staff, Major General Farouk Yahaya. This has stirred up lot of rumours in the media about mass retirements in the military. I wish to use this medium to dispel such unfounded rumours."

"Retirement is only on voluntary basis for senior officers who desire to do so. At this point, no retirement has been authorised by the Military High Command," he said.

The DDMO said there was no reason to contemplate such rumoured mass retirement, as the services of these senior officers were very much needed at this critical time in the security of the country.

Speaking on the successes of operational activities across the country between May 20 and June 2, 2021, he said, "It is worthy to note that these operations are conducted simultaneously in the various theatres of operation on daily basis across the country."

"The un-relenting and committed efforts of the gallant troops as well as the cumulative results of our operational activities in the various operations and specific events will be highlighted under the different operations."

"Within the period in focus, troops of the Armed Forces of Nigeria intensified their operational efforts in the fight against terrorism, banditry, hoodlums and militancy as well as other criminalities across all the geo-political zones of the country."

"Troops conducted series of clearance patrols, ambush, raid, picketing, cordon and search operations as well as artillery bombardments. Oth-

ers are anti-piracy, anti-illegal oil bunkering, anti-crude oil theft, anti-pipeline vandalism and anti-smuggling operations were also conducted within the period.

"There were also extensive air operations, which included air patrols, Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance missions, offensive air strikes, air interdictions, search and rescue operations as well as close air support for ground troops. These operations within the period yielded appreciable results," General Onyeuko said.

He said troops of *Operation Hadin Kai* between 20th May and 2nd June, 2021 carried out series of operational activities, where they rescued kidnapped victims, neutralised scores of terrorists, destroyed terrorists' enclaves, arrested terrorists and intercepted terrorists' logistics items including vehicles.

General Onyeuko added, "On 20 May, 2021, troops had contact and engaged BHT criminal elements in Gwoza LGA of Borno State. This occurred as troops swiftly responded to a distress call by farmers on attack on their location. Troops gallantly rescued the farmers."

"During the encounter, several terrorists were neutralised, while some others escaped with varying degrees of gunshot wounds. Also, on the same day, troops while conducting aggressive clearance operation on BHT hideouts at Ngaiwa, Tongunle, Washelle, Mo'o, Mudollo, Mugdalla and Amtul villages, all in Dikwa LGA of Borno State, killed scores of the terrorists and recovered large caches of arms and ammunition."

"In related developments, between 21 and 25 May, troops conducted cordon and search, raid operations and arrested BHT logistics suppliers at Ngamdu town in Kaga LGA of Borno State, New Barracks Location along Damaturu-Potiskum road as well as Kukareta town in Damaturu LGA of Yobe State. Items recovered during the operation include: large numbers of jerry cans and drums of PMS, assorted arms and ammunition and assorted logistics items. This large consignment of logistics has drastically dislocated the terrorists' logistics network in the region."

"Meanwhile, on 23 May, 2021, the Air Task Force of *Operation Hadin Kai* conducted an extensive air interdiction missions near Gudumbali in Guzamal LGA and the Tombins of Lake Chad of Borno State."

"The air interdiction missions executed with various NAF platforms resulted in the neutralisation of scores of BHT criminal elements and destruction of their camps and logistics facilities."