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## Boko Haram Dislodges Multinational Force, Takes Over Baga

By Kareem Haruna

— Jan 5, 2015 | 4 Comments

Displaced residents of Baga town, where Boko Haram terrorists have now hoisted their flags after dislodging the formidable Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) on Saturday, yesterday recounted the chilling details how insurgents overpowered the armed forces and forced everyone to flee into the neighbouring Chad Republic.

Some residents who were lucky to escape the deadly attack said they fled alongside armed soldiers, who had given up after the terrorists outgunned them.

Homes, business premises, government structures and even part of the seized MNJTF base were burnt down as the insurgents, who stormed the town from all sides, gave soldiers on ground no breathing space as both forces battled for hours. All escape routes led to Chad for the beleaguered fishermen and other

dwellers of Baga, many of whom were reportedly killed and others injured in the crossfire.

Audu Labbo, a resident of Baga who spoke to relatives through a cell phone from Chad Republic, said: "The soldiers were overpowered and had to abandon their post and flee for safety.

"They came in their hundreds, driving several Hilux patrol vehicles, trucks and some on motorcycles as they immediately began to throw explosives and bombs coming out from long rifles they carried on their shoulders (Rocket Propelled Grenades, RPGs) as well as those rifles called AK47," said Labbo.

"The bombing and shootings killed scores of people, including the soldiers, and many people got injured."

The embattled resident who is now taking refuge in a Chadian town near Baga said they fled all day through the lakes using canoes as the insurgents had barricaded all the land routes leading to Chadian borders.

"We ran for over eight hours before crossing to Chad Republic through boats and canoes," said Labbo. "We could not go through the land routes because Boko Haram gunmen had blocked all routes; those who could not board the canoes had to swim through Lake Chad before some of us could get a boat and continue to flee. Many drowned in the lake water because they could not swim long distance."

Women and children were amongst the victims who got drowned, LEADERSHIP learnt.

Our reporter also gathered that the fleeing soldiers, who had apparently run out of ammunition and could not get reinforcements, had to join the fleeing civilians and flee to Chad.

Some of the soldiers were reportedly said to have pulled off their uniforms and discarded their rifles in order to escape the terrorists who were showing some level of mercy to fleeing civilians.

"All of us ran for our dear lives; even the soldiers were seen pulling off their uniforms and begging us to give them plain clothes so that the Boko Haram gunmen would not identify them as we all fled to Chad," said a fisherman who pleaded not to be named.

The source added that Baga was not the only town attacked.

"They had attacked Goro Koyu before heading for Baga, because we met some residents of Goro Koyu and Baga Baga also Baga is

They had attacked Cross-Rauwa before heading for Baga, because we met some residents of Cross-Rauwa and Doron Baga also fleeing in the bushes, and they told us that separate troops of Boko Haram terrorists were attacking their villages at the same time.

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