

launch of a book, 'Voices from Within', an essay on Sam Amuka, held at the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Victoria Island, Lagos, yesterday. PHOTO BY BENEDICT UWALAKA

Boko Haram: Nigerian Soldiers Rescue 71 Villagers From Terrorists' Camps

BY ABDULKAREEM HARUNA, Maiduguri

A total of 71 villagers who had been in the captivity of Boko Haram terrorists for months were yesterday rescued by Nigerian soldiers during a deadly gun battle that claimed the lives of scores of the terrorists, military officials said.

Kilakisa village in Damboa local government area of Borno State was one of the isolated villages where Boko Haram gunmen held sway, lording it over trapped villagers who could not flee to the state capital, Maiduguri.

On Monday, soldiers of the 7 Division of the Nigerian Army took another rescue operation to Kilakisa where they were confronted by armed Boko Haram terrorists. After few minutes of shoot-out, the soldiers outgunned the terrorists who fled from the area, abandoning the villagers that had

been in their captivity for months.

A top military officer confirmed yesterday's development to journalists.

Similarly, spokesman of the 7 Division of the Nigerian Army, Maiduguri, Colonel I. T. Gusau, said the 21 Battalion of the Division stormed Kashimbiri and Walimberi villages which had been camps of the Boko Haram terrorists.

He said the troops engaged the terrorists in a shoot-out that lasted for hours during which scores of the insurgents were killed.

"Our gallant troops have rescued a total number of 59 civilians in two camps of the terrorist group in Kashimbiri and Walimberi villages in Konduga local government area of Borno State", Col. Gusau said.

"Those that were rescued included 25 children, 29 women and five elderly men in the above mentioned villages.

"Many of the terrorists were killed in the

course of the operations, but mop-up is still going on, so as soon as we have the figure, it will be made known to you", he added.

The rescued persons said they had been in the bondage of Boko Haram terrorists who held them in the villages for nearly one year.

Yagana Kyari, a female, said she spent about nine months with the Boko Haram terrorists.

"I never knew I would be free again because I have spent months in the camp of the terrorists, so I was waiting for death. They often threatened to kill us each time they noticed we were not pleased with staying with them, or if they suspected that we wanted to flee. So, we had to stay with them all the while. They gave us food, but usually not enough for the day", said Ya'gana Kyari, who added that she was taken from her village, Kawuri, about 50km from Maiduguri, to the camp in Walimberi.

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