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Troops Arrest Top Boko Haram Leaders

Abdulkareem Haruna

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Amidst massive raid of camps and ammunition dumps of Boko Haram across northern and central parts of Borno State, troops of the Nigerian Army have arrested four notorious leaders of the Islamic insurgency group responsible for recent attacks in that region, Army officials said.

This came after what seemed a very busy Thursday for various formations of the Army currently executing the counterinsurgency operations during which 18 Boko Haram insurgents were gunned down in seven major raid operation across the border settlements of Borno state.

Large amounts of money allegedly used by the Boko Haram to recruit new members were also recovered during the operation.

On Thursday, soldiers rescued more than 200 civilians, mostly aged persons, women and children that had been under the captivity of insurgents.

Spokesman of the Nigeria Army, Colonel Sani Kukasheka Usman, had, in two separate statements released yesterday said a large ammunition cache were also recovered.

He said, "Troops of 3 Battalion, of 22 Task Force Brigade have made an unprecedented catch with the arrest of 4 Boko Haram terrorists Ameer (kingpins) at Rann, headquarters of Kala Balge Local Government Area today, Friday 22nd April 2016", said Colonel Usman.

"The arrested kingpins specialized on various aspects of criminality to sustain the Boko Haram terrorists group in their areas.

"The four terrorists were arrested following a tip off by well meaning members of the public.

"Subsequently, the troops conducted a cordon and search operation in the general area that led to the apprehension of the terrorist leaders, who contribute to the sustenance of the insurgency through their illegal trade specialization.

"The arrested kingpins include Umara Mai Gyarani Rediyo (Radio Technician), Umaru Mai Nama, (who specialize in cattle rustling and sales), Alifa Makinta (a specialist on stealing foodstuffs) and Balu Jugudum (in charge of stolen jewellery)".

He said presently, the suspects whose names are yet to be disclosed, for avoidance of jeopardising operation, are undergoing interrogation.

On the Thursday feat achieved by the troops, Colonel Usman said.

"On Thursday, 21st April 2016, troops of 21 Brigade Nigerian Army carried out clearance operations at Bulari, Tori 1, 2 and 3 during which they successfully cleared the general area of remnants of Boko Haram terrorists.

"During the operation, 10 terrorists were killed and one was captured alive. Unfortunately, 2 Civilian JTF accompanying the troops lost their lives. The troops rescued 7 civilians and recovered a Volkswagen Golf car, 15 bicycles and various bags of foodstuffs.

"The troops of 22 Brigade on the other hand intercepted 26 persons comprising mostly women and children, coming towards Adah village in Ngala local government area of Borno State, who on interrogation stated that they were held hostage by Boko Haram terrorists, but escaped as their captors were moving towards Lake Chad general area because of troops presence.

"Similarly, troops of the same Brigade carried out a fighting patrol, cordon and search operation on Thursday 21st April 2016, along Dikwa-Marte road, Kaje, Selenge, Manekura, Mane Gana and Gawayi villages. Although there wasn't any encounter with the terrorists, the troops recovered 5 motorcycles, 6 Boko Haram terrorists flags and 4 bags of grinded corn in Mane Gana village.

"They also rescued 3 women and 5 children at the same village. The rescued persons told the troops that their husbands were actually Boko Haram terrorists who have ran away towards Lake Chad area due to immense pressure from the military clearance operations.

"On their part, troops of 2 Battalion also conducted patrol towards Dikwa, Ginal and Kala in which they had an encounter with Boko

On their part, troops of 3 Battalion also conducted patrol towards Dierna, Siger and Kala in which they had an encounter with Boko Haram terrorists in which the gallant troops killed 8 of them and recovered 2 Dane Guns and 4 assorted batteries.

"The troops of 7 Division Special Fighting Forces attached to 25 Task Force Brigade Damboa, at a checkpoint, arrested a suspected Boko Haram terrorist, Abubakar Bello and 6 other suspects carrying 28 gallons of "Turkey" brand of vegetable oil, 8 bags of flour, 130 crates of soft drinks and 2 bags of sugar. In addition, 5 mobile telephone handsets, 1 external hard drive and 5 flash drives, 2 national identity cards and the sum of Seventy Thousand Naira (N70,000.00k) only were recovered from him.

He said preliminary investigation discovered that the insurgents now dilute the vegetable oil with other substances to produce diesel to power their generators.

"The troops of 254 Task Force Battalion in conjunction with vigilantes and Borno Youths Empowerment Scheme (BOYES), also carried out clearance operations at Mufurundi, Kaleri, Masemari, Bego, Bale, Gadzama and Gagantilo villages along Damboa-Bale-Gwoza road. During the operation, the troops encountered and detonated an Improvised Explosive Device (IED), buried by the terrorists at Gadzama village. They also encountered Boko Haram terrorists at Bego where they engaged the terrorists, neutralized them and cleared their camps within the general area. **In the encounter, the troops killed 9 Boko Haram terrorists and recovered 1 AK-47 rifle with registration number TH5712 and 17 rounds of 7.62mm (Special) ammunition. They also rescued 157 persons held hostages by the terrorists.**

"The troops of 26 Task Force Brigade stationed in Gwoza yesterday also intercepted 8 suspected Boko Haram terrorists, trying to enter Gwoza town. Though they claimed to be farmers coming from Shiadawey, Takwala and Amdaga Madachi villages respectively, which were known terrorists hideouts, preliminary investigations showed that they were indeed terrorists on a recruitment drive. This was made manifest when the sum of Six Hundred and Thirty Seven Thousand (N637,000.00k) Naira was discovered on Abdullahi Yakubu who was identified by another escapee/suspected Boko Haram terrorist as having trading links with the terrorists while the others were confirmed to have participated in carrying out various terrorists acts for the Boko Haram terrorists group.

"Similarly, one Ibrahim Bute aged 67 years, of Gobara village was arrested by the troops on suspicion of being a Boko Haram kingpin.

"The troops of 117 Task Force Battalion following a tip off, also arrested a suspected Boko Haram terrorist who gave his name as Bello Isah at Mugulvu village. The unit also discovered and retrieved 29 rounds of 7.62mm (Special) rounds of ammunition hidden at a farm in Gella village", said Colonel Usman, an Acting Director Army Public Relations.

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