

Troops Kill ISWAP Commander Abu Fatima, 62 Others In Borno

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Troops of "Operation Hadin Kai" Joint Taskforce in the North East have killed Abu Fatima, a top commander of the Islamic States of West African Province (ISWAP).

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Security sources said the terrorist leader was killed alongside two of his top men at Aleru village of Kukawa local government area of Borno State.

The Nigerian Army confirmed the killing on its official Facebook page yesterday.

Abu Fatima was among the top wanted terrorists by the Nigerian military with a ₦100 million bounty on him.

He was said to be responsible for coordinating attacks in northern Borno State, especially the Baga axis.

He was first captured alive but later died as a result of excessive bleeding, the army said.

Among items recovered in the operation were motorcycles, AK-47 rifles and bomb-making materials.

The death of Abu Fatima is almost synonymous to death of Shekau, especially to the people around Baga, Kukawa, Doro and others.

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Troops also killed several Boko Haram terrorists in Bita, in Gwoza local government area of Borno State.

The military confirmed the development yesterday morning, adding that the intense battle resulted in the killing of at least 60 terrorists while others retreated with gunshot wounds.

The terrorists struck in the village middle of the night but met their Waterloo as troops responded to them swiftly.

The military also overpowered and chased the terrorists in Damasak, in Mobbar local government area of Borno State on Thursday night, with an undisclosed number of terrorists killed.

Confirming the Bita success to our correspondent, the acting deputy director of Operation Hadin Kai, Captain Reuben Kovangiya, said the air component of the theatre was still bombarding the terrorists with more casualties expected.

Meanwhile, the Defence Headquarters (DHQ) says Amnesty International's report of a mounting death toll and looming humanitarian crisis was concocted to discredit military efforts in ensuring protection of citizens across the country.

Amnesty International on May 29 released a report titled "Nigeria: Mounting death toll and looming humanitarian crisis amid unchecked attacks by armed groups."

The report said 10,217 persons were killed in Nigeria from 29 May 2023 to date, adding that 2,630 deaths were recorded in Plateau State alone.

The director, Defence Media Operations, Major General Markus Kangye, in a reaction on Friday questioned AI's methodology and sources of such staggering statistics.

"DHQ is not aware of the source of Amnesty International's statistics which are inaccurate. It is therefore very sad and unfortunate that reputable organisations such as Amnesty International could produce such humongous figures purposely to discredit the Nigerian military," he said.

He reiterated the military high command's strong reservations about the sweeping generalisation, lack of contextual depth and the failure of the statement to recognise the monumental strides made by the armed forces of Nigeria under the current administration.

He added that the statement paints a bleak and generalised picture of national insecurity, largely ignoring the asymmetric and evolving nature of modern threats, especially those rooted in decades of socio-political and economic complexities.

According to Kangye, while there were undeniable challenges in specific regions, the DHQ strongly refutes the implication that the military had been absent or inactive in the face of these threats.

He added that since President Bola Ahmed Tinubu assumed office in May 2023, the DHQ working under the renewed strategic direction of the Commander-in-Chief had achieved significant milestones in degrading terrorist networks, disrupting criminal syndicates, and restoring civil authority across many volatile regions.

He listed some of the achievements as the killing of over 5000 insurgents/bandits across multiple theatres of operation, including the Northeast, Northwest, and North Central.

He added that dozens of high-value terrorist commanders are equally apprehended or neutralized through precision strikes and coordinated intelligence-driven operations.

General Kangye said military's efforts had led to recovery of over 350 communities and villages previously under the control of terrorists and bandits, particularly in Borno, Niger, Zamfara, and Katsina states.

He noted that the sustained presence of troops in areas such as Maru (Zamfara), Bokkos (Plateau) and Logo (Benue) had also enabled displaced persons to begin returning home under military protection.

The statement further noted that the military within the period rescued over 1,200 abducted civilians, including women and children, many of whom were kidnapped in mass abduction incidents, adding that several notorious kidnapping syndicates have been dismantled.

Relatedly, he said the Nigerian Air Force had conducted over 500 successful air interdictions, close air support among other operation while significantly degrading the movement and logistics capability of armed groups.

He dismissed the accusation of impunity as unfounded, saying, "DHQ prosecutes erring personnel by convening court-martials at intervals to handle all reported infringements. HQ 8 Div has also set up Report Desk and emergency numbers to ensure transparency in the conduct of its operations. So far, all cases reported were given needed attention and were treated. All arrested criminal collaborators, suspects were handed over to DSS and NP as well as civil authorities depending on the nature of the case."

He said the Amnesty International's data quoted in the report did not reflect the actual situation in Plateau, Benue, Katsina and Zamfara states.

"Therefore, the allegation of killing of 2,630 persons in Plateau State in the last two years is a concoction of falsehood in pursuant of self-serving agenda," he said.

He said following the reorganisation of deployments and conduct of broad-spectrum subsidiary operations in Plateau State from July 2023, the state witnessed continuous improvement until the coordinated attacks in some communities in Bokkos and Bassa LGAs of Plateau State on April 2 and 14, 2025.

The period covered in the press release did not record coordinated attacks on communities except for the Christmas Eve 2023 and the recent security breaches in Bokkos and Bassa LGAs of Plateau State.

Similarly, he said the Amnesty International report on insecurity in the Northwest region, especially in Sokoto, Zamfara, Kebbi and Katsina were exaggerated and not fully reflective of ground realities.

“The report rightly underscores the complexity and severity of the security challenges in the Northwest, particularly those posed by bandits and other non-state actors. However, it falls short in reflecting the multi-pronged countermeasures, ongoing sacrifices by security forces, and tangible gains recorded in degrading terrorist and bandit networks,” he said.

He continued, “While Amnesty International emphasises figures and narratives of failure, it fails to contextualise the efforts, operational constraints, community dynamics, and collaboration among stakeholders currently shaping the battle space.”

On Zamfara, he said most of the areas mentioned in the report had seen active military presence and restoration of civil authority.

“In the last 24 months troops have neutralised over 47 bandits kingpins operating within Zamfara. Our troops have conducted over 2000 deliberate offensive operations within this period,” he said.

He said troops rescued 687 abductees rescued and numerous livestock, destroyed hundreds of bandits’ camps and killed over 1500-foot soldiers and kingpins while over 200 collaborators had been arrested.

In Sokoto State, he said contrary to the claims in the report, the Lakurawa group is currently under active targeting and disruption via intelligence-led operations.

In the same vein, in Kebbi State, he said contrary to Amnesty International’s report, the DHQ records indicated only 11 major incidents between May 2024 and 2025, with quick response interventions reducing casualty rates.

Furthermore, in Katsina, he said attacks reduced significantly due to active troop patrols, ambush operations and better intel fusion with locals.

“Just a few days ago on 23rd May 2025, 21 bandits were neutralised during an ongoing offensive operation in the Ruwan Godiya community. Deliberate offensive operations to bandits’ enclaves are ongoing in the state. The Land Component, working with Air Component and DSS, has arrested 77 key informants and collaborators who aid bandit logistics within Faskari, Batsari, and Dan Musa LGAs,”.

Similarly in Benue State, he said contrary to AI claims only seven local governments recorded such attacks.

He said, “Out of the 23 LGAs in Benue State, only 7 mentioned including Kwande LGA are epicenters of crisis in the State. The remaining 15 LGAs are relatively peaceful and quiet. From records available to DHQ, a total of 693 people have been killed in Benue State while 23 own personnel were killed within the period reviewed by the organisation and not as claimed. On IDPs claim, it is necessary to state that almost all the camps in Benue State are near empty. People only populate the camps once they get a hint on eminent distribution of relief materials,”.

He lamented “DHQ wish to unequivocally state that Amnesty International has been observed lately to be making wrong feedbacks with factual errors, public misinformation and erosion of trust in media and the general populace,”.

He reiterated the commitment of the military upholding human rights and international humanitarian law.

He said “allegations of misconduct are taken seriously and are investigated through established military and judicial processes. It is, however, unacceptable to generalize isolated failures or lapses as institutional policy,”.

He restated the commitment of the Armed Forces to protecting all citizens, restoring peace, and safeguarding the territorial integrity of the nation.

He said, “Constructive engagement is welcomed, but disinformation or alarmist narratives undermine both local and international efforts to achieve enduring peace. Amnesty International is encouraged to engage more meaningfully with stakeholders, including the military, to develop nuanced, data-driven insights that support national security and humanitarian efforts without undermining the sacrifices of those in the frontlines.”