

How Boko Haram kingpin Bama died 24 hours after gun duel

• Two others in his company still alive

■ Yusuf ALLI, Managing Editor, Northern Operation

DETAILS of the capture of Boko Haram high ranking operative, Bama, in

Damaturu, Yobe State, emerged last night with a source saying he was shot in what is called Sudden Operation in security circles.

This kind of operation happens by chance.

Bama died early yesterday of gunshot wounds he received while being arrested by security men at a Damaturu market.

Sources said Bama was surrounded at the time by his body guards who were armed to the teeth, and the only way he could be arrested was to demobilise him, which was effected by shooting him in the leg.

Two men, described as key members of the sect were arrested with Bama and are now undergoing interrogation.

A top source gave an insight into the operation and said: "What happened actually was that it was a Sudden Operation or a happenstance. Somebody in the JTF team just spotted him buying something in the midst of heavily armed members of the sect and the JTF men went for him.

"The routine operation would have been fatal for the JTF men if they had attempted to capture

Bama. Being a wanted figure, the JTF did not know the extent to which he was armed with his foot men.

"The real intention was to incapacitate him. That was why he was shot in the leg. But he bled much between the spot and the medical centre.

"The JTF men knew he was an important figure but if he was not immediately incapacitated, he could escape because he knew Damaturu and Yobe very well. He was familiar with the terrain.

"And the shooting really helped as some armed members of the sect, who accompanied him, ran away, having realised that the game was up.

"Even at that, Bama was given the best of medical treatment to save his life. In the midst of the battle to save his life, he provided some lead for JTF.

"As JTF men were battling to evacuate Bama and stave off reprisals, they managed to arrest two key members of the sect,

who were also demobilised.

"These two suspects, who accompanied Bama to the market, are still being interrogated and may be flown to Abuja latest by Friday night.

"I can tell you that they have made useful statements."

Bama could not survive the gunshot wounds and was certified dead early yesterday by doctors who had battled for several hours to save his life.

Security has subsequently been beefed up in and around Yobe and Borno states following fears of retaliatory action by members of the sect.

Investigation by our correspondent revealed that the condition of the dismissed army private deteriorated late on Thursday with his pulse 'suddenly dropping. Doctors' efforts to restore his breath failed.

His corpse was transferred to a morgue in Damaturu, but it could not be immediately ascertained if the authorities would approve Islamic burial (Janazah) for him.

A top source in the Joint Task

Force (JTF) said: "Dismissed Army Private, Habib Bama, who masterminded several bombings by Boko Haram in the Federal Capital Territory, Niger and Plateau States is dead.

"He died of gunshot wounds he received on Thursday during his arrest by the Joint Task Force in Damaturu, Yobe State. "He was critically wounded on Thursday when we tried to arrest him and he resisted. He died this morning (Friday) from the gunshot wounds."

The source added: "He was clinically certified dead in the early hours of Friday. I cannot tell you where he died and the morgue we have kept the corpse.

"But I can say that security agencies were able to interrogate him even while in pain and he was able to respond to some questions."

The source, however, said the JTF has beefed up security in the Borno-Yobe axis because of likely retaliatory measures by members of the sect.

"It was unfortunate that Bama died of gunshots. We had planned

to fly him to Abuja for the best treatment, but he could not just make it.

"The JTF has been mandated to strengthen security in Borno and Yobe states because of reprisals from members of Boko Haram, who are well entrenched in the two states.

The late Bama was implicated in the bombings at Mogadishu Barracks, Police Headquarters, UN Building, St Theresa's Catholic Church at Madalla and many sites in Jos.

He was declared wanted by Security agents after the Madalla church bomb blast.

The manhunt for Bama commenced on February 15, 2012 when the State Security Service (SSS) declared him wanted.

Fears of reprisals in Niger, Yobe

■ Jide ORINTU

BANKS, schools and shops in Jos shut down yesterday following attacks on places of worship. The rumour also forced residents the day until the State Commission debunked it as false.

She assured residents on the se and said the police had put in pla