

Boko Haram loses 20 men as army barracks raid fails

Security agencies have launched a fresh probe into the whereabouts of Boko Haram leader Imam Abubakar Shekau, who denied calling for a ceasefire in a video released at the weekend.

They are working on clues that Shekau and his wanted commanders may still be holed up either in Northern Mali or among Al-Qaeda in The Maghreb.

Twenty suspected members of the sect were killed after a failed attack on a military barracks in Borno yesterday.

The video tape has forced the government to direct all military formations, the police and security agencies to be on the alert.

A source, who spoke in confidence, said: "The sudden appearance of Shekau has created a fresh security challenge to locate his actual whereabouts. It also showed that his look-alike might have been shot to death in the past few months by security agencies.

"We are suspecting that he is either still holed up in Northern Mali or among the Al-Qaeda in the Maghreb with his commanders.

"We are collaborating with France , Niger , Chad and Malian authorities to locate these Boko Haram leaders.

On the alleged ceasefire declared by the sect, the source said: "It is obvious from Shekau's video message that a faction of Boko Haram was interested in dialogue. This has confirmed intelligence report that the ceasefire should not be trusted in any manner.

"It has become obvious too that the sect had broken into factions. Members of one of the factions also came out in masks to address a briefing in Maiduguri last week."

Concerning Shekau's threat that Boko Haram will strike soon, the source added: "All military, police and security agencies have been re-directed to be on the alert. We are not taking it lightly at all.

"We will re-strategise because it is obvious that they went underground in the last few months to evaluate their methods. These Boko Haram leaders are however still wanted by the Joint Task Force(JTF)."

On the JTF's list are five members of the Shurra Committee (the highest making body of the sect) and 19 Boko Haram commanders.

The five members of the Shurra Committee, are Imam Abubakar Shekau (N50million); Habibu Yusuf (a.k.a Asalafi) N25million; Khalid Albarnawai (N25million); Momodu Bama (N25 million), and Mohammed Zangina (N25million).

The Boko Haram Commanders are: Abu Saad (N10million), Abba Kaka (N10million), Abdulmalik Bama (N10million) , Umar Fulata(N10million), Alhaji Mustapha (Massa), Ibrahim (N10million), Abubakar Suleiman-Habu (a.k.a Khalid), N10million; Hassan Jazair N10million, Ali Jalingo (N10million), Alhaji Musa Modu (N10million), Bashir Aketa (N10million), Abba Goroma(N10million), Ibrahim Bashir (N10million), Abubakar Zakariya (N10million), and Tukur Ahmed Mohammed (N10million).

The Joint Task Force (JTF) or Operation Restore Order (ORO) said yesterday that it repelled an attack by suspected Boko Haram terrorists on the military barracks in Munguno, Borno State.

Munguno is about 200 km from Maiduguri, the state capital.

“Information available to JTF indicated that some suspected terrorists attempted to attack a military barracks in Munguno, headquarters of Munguno Local Government Area of Borno State on Sunday.

“The attack was repelled by the JTF troops on the outskirts of the barracks,” JTF spokesman Lt.-Col. Sagir Musa stated in a statement in Maiduguri.

He said 20 of the attackers were killed during a gun duel with soldiers.

“The encounter led to the death of 20 suspected Boko Haram terrorists.

“Three four-wheel drive vehicles and eight motor cycles used by the suspects were destroyed and several arms and ammunition were recovered.

“The following items were recovered. Seven AK 47 rifles, 10 rocket propeller grenade, two RPG Tubes, large quantities of assorted ammunition and eight assorted magazines,” he said.

Lt. Col. Musa said that the JTF arrested also the suspected masterminds of last week’s bomb blasts in Maiduguri.

“In a related development, based on intelligence reports, a special operation was conducted by the JTF, which resulted in the arrest of two suspected high profile commanders of the Boko Haram sect in Maiduguri.

“Those arrested were suspected to be responsible for the February 28 explosions which coincided with the Progressive Governors’ meeting in Maiduguri,” Lt.-Col. Musa said, adding that the two suspects were being interrogated.