

Boko Haram: Buhari orders total war

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Massive attacks by the armed forces on Boko Haram camps are in progress in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States on the order of President Muhammadu Buhari in the latest effort to end the terrorism in the Northeast.

A no retreat, no surrender operation modality has been adopted by the military for the operation even as the Chadian Army announced yesterday that its men had killed about 117 terrorists on Lake Chad islands.

President Buhari who returned to Abuja from Cameroun on Thursday at the end of another round of the anti-Boko Haram campaign is due in Benin Republic today to rally the support of the government and people of that country in the war against terrorism.

He also told the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa, Dr. Mohammed Ibn Chambas, who visited yesterday that the army is now more ready than ever before to defeat Boko Haram.

He was confident that the full activation and deployment of the Multi National Joint Task Force which has been established under the auspices of the Lake Chad Basin Commission will hasten the defeat and elimination of Boko Haram.

He said that the morale of troops in the front-line states has improved significantly following the establishment of the Command and Control Centre of the military in Maiduguri.

"You can tell the Secretary-General that we are doing our best and our best will be good enough for the nation and the sub-region," President Buhari told Dr. Ibn Chambas.

Buhari's visit to Benin Republic today, according to Presidency sources, is aimed at consolidating the "military alliance" between the country and Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger and Chad.

But a suicide bomber struck at the Gaboru market, Maiduguri yesterday killing 16 people while Boko Haram extremists went on a revenge mission to Kikuwa-Gari village, Yobe State, leaving 10 villagers dead.

A top military source said yesterday that troops "have launched massive attacks on the over 200 camps and many Forest bases of Boko Haram insurgents in the North-East. The counter-insurgency attacks could be likened to a full-scale war.

"The President has mandated the military to adopt a no retreat, no surrender. The new Service Chiefs are leading this new initiative.

"With the understanding of Chad, Niger Republic and Cameroon, there will be no hiding place for the

insurgents.

“Some of the bombings being recorded in markets and motor-parks in the North-East are consequences of the pursuit of the insurgents from their hideouts.”

On President Buhari’s visit to Cotonou today, a source said “Buhari’s trip is part of the steps to co-opt Benin Republic into the new military alliance by Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon and Niger Republic.

“Troops are closing in on the insurgents in all fronts, we do not want them to use Benin Republic as a new base, especially for their supplies.

“The President believes that all our neighbours must be involved in the anti-terror war. This is why he is not taking anything for granted.”

Confirming the Lake Chad operation against Boko Haram, spokesman for Chad’s army, Col. Azem Bermendoa Agouna, said : “For two weeks, Boko Haram terrorists have been trying to infiltrate our islands on Lake Chad to carry out attacks on peaceful citizens.

“Our armed forces and security forces have launched a vast offensive to dig out and neutralise these terrorists on these islands.

“Several boats have been destroyed and several weapons of different calibres have been recovered.

“117 terrorists have been killed, two Chadian soldiers died and two others were wounded” in the operation against the Nigeria-based movement, which began two weeks ago.

“The sweep continues and the definitive toll will be released later.”

Suicide bomber kills 16, injures 11 in Maiduguri

A suicide bomber struck a crowded Gamboru market in Maiduguri yesterday, killing 16 people, in an attack that bore the hallmarks of the terror Islamist militant group Boko Haram.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the blast, but the city has been repeatedly targeted by the extremists.

The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) said 11 people were wounded in the attack, which came just as 10 other people were killed when Boko Haram insurgents raided Kikuwa-Gari village, Yobe State, in a revenge attack against local vigilantes.

Reports said about 32 gunmen on motorcycles raided the village at around 10:30 pm on Wednesday, killing 10 people including two women.

Witnesses said the driver of a tricycle detonated a device at the entrance to the crowded market around 7.30 a.m. yesterday.

“The wreckage of the tricycle used by the bomber was there. I saw the charred body of the bomber,” said Usman Ali, adding that he saw rescue workers removing bodies from the scene.

But a police officer who works in the Explosives Ordnance Department said he counted eight bodies at the scene of the blast near Gamboru market in Maiduguri.

He said the bomber, a male, arrived at the scene carrying a female passenger on a tricycle laden with explosives.

“From the way his body was destroyed it showed that he was actually the suicide bomber and not the woman,” the police officer, who did not want to be named, told journalists.

A source the University of Maiduguri Teaching Hospital confirmed to journalists they received five bodies and seven injured persons.

Boko Haram 10 in revenge raid

A resident of Kukuwa-Gari, Baba Nuhu said the terrorists who attacked the village also destroyed much of the village.

“They burnt more than half of the village, including food silos and livestock on which the people depend for their livelihood,” Nuhu said.

“The attack came two days after two Boko Haram members who came into the village were identified by residents and mobbed to death,” Nuhu said, adding that “the attack was obviously in reprisal” over their killing

then coming.

News of the attack was slow to emerge because the insurgents have destroyed telecom masts since the insurgency began in 2009.

The Gujba area of Yobe state, where Kukuwa-Gari village is located, has been hard hit by Boko Haram violence in the past but has seen relative calm since troops reclaimed it in March.

Buhari orders release of N5 billion to Victims Support Fund

President Muhammadu Buhari yesterday directed the Head of Service of the Federation, Mr. Danladi Kifasi, to facilitate the immediate release of the N5 Billion pledged by government last August to the Victims Support Fund (VSF).

Receiving a briefing from the VSF Presidential Committee headed by Lt. Gen. Theophilus Danjuma (rtd.) in Abuja,also urged the Committee to ensure proper coordination with other government agencies providing support and assistance to victims of terrorism.

General Danjuma had told the President that of the N55.92 Billion pledged at the fund-raising dinner for the project last year, N33.54 Billion was still outstanding, including N5 Billion from the Federal Government.

He said that the VSF currently has N23.33 Billion in four bank accounts and that the Committee received approval from the immediate past administration to incorporate the money into a Trust Fund, to “insulate it from political interference”.

General Danjuma asked the President to use his office to persuade all organizations and individuals to honour their pledges to the Committee.

President Buhari, according to a statement by his Special Adviser on Media and Publicity, Femi Adesina, assured General Danjuma and members of the VSF Committee that his administration was taking proactive steps to defeat terrorism in the country.

He said that despite the challenge of acquiring much needed strategic equipment and weapons to confront the terrorists, the Nigerian military has recently gained much ground in its effort to defeat and degrade Boko Haram.



He added that the full deployment of the Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF), under the auspices of member-states of Lake Chad Basin Commission, will further boost ongoing military operations against the insurgents.

Speaking to reporters at the end of his meeting with the President,General Danjuma said the committee “will continue to ask people who pledged to honour their pledges.”

He described the N20 billion as a drop in the ocean compared with the needs of the victims .

“If really the war stops tomorrow, already those displaced are really looking for support to go back to their homes and this N20 billion is nothing,” he added

Also yesterday ,President Buhari declared that with the formation of a stronger regional coalition, Nigeria and neighbouring countries now have an increased capacity to deal effectively with Boko Haram and other terrorist groups.



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