

...the Grand-Imam of the New Year prayer programme, at the Palace in Ile-Ife at the weekend.

Wife of Boko Haram's factional leader, Mammam Nur, killed — Army

THE military said yesterday that the wife of Mammam Nur, factional leader of the Boko Haram terror sect, was among the casualties of a raid on the group's location in the Lake Chad region.

Nur, son of Boko Haram's spiritual founder, Muhammed Yusuf, was himself declared by the army as having been 'fatally injured' during the operation. There is no independent confirmation of his injury or his wife's death yet.

The army also said yesterday that 1,050 insurgents had surrendered to troops in Lake Chad and Monguno general area of operations.

Many other terrorists are said to be on the run.

A separate joint operation on Sambisa forest by the Army and the Air Force has claimed the lives of scores of insurgents, the military said.

Spokesman for the Operation Lafiya Dole Theatre Command in Maiduguri, Onyema Nwachukwu, warned communities to watch out for the fleeing Boko Haram insurgents.

Nur is fingered as the brain behind the August 2011 bombing of the UN building in Abuja.

The State Security Services (SSS) declared him wanted the following month and placed a N25 million bounty on him.

He parted ways with

From Blessing Olaifa

Abubakar Shekau and proceeded to form his own group which he named AbuMussab Albarnawi.

Onyema said the string of success by the military was achieved following the sustained "onslaught on Boko Haram terrorists' enclaves in the Lake Chad region.

He said 250 foot soldiers from the Albarnawy camp have surrendered to Nigerian authorities due to the devastating artillery and aerial bombardments by Operation Lafiya Dole troops while "many of the insurgents who fled the onslaught are now taking advantage of the "AMNESTY" offered by the Nigerian government by surrendering to Nigerian Forces."

He added that 700 insurgents also surrendered to troops at Monguno, Borno State in an ongoing clearance operation.

The military also said among the insurgents "fleeing from the ongoing offensive are senior and junior commanders in the Albarnawy faction who are now attempting to melt into other communities in and

around Kano, Geidam and Gashua axis unnoticed."

He asked residents of Kano, Geidam, Gashua, Hadeja and the northern part of Jigawa to "be vigilant and watch out for strange faces suddenly appearing in their communities and promptly report same to security agencies."

He vowed that the ongoing onslaught would be "tenaciously sustained."

He also revealed that about 300 insurgents were currently undergoing de-radicalization process for possible integration into the society.

"We call on Boko Haram insurgents to abandon the futile struggle; take advantage of the Safe Corridor programme and surrender to troops in any location nearest to them. We guarantee their safety and incorporation into the programme for de-radicalization."

In the joint operation in Sambisa forest, the air force and the army said that in addition to the scores of insurgents killed, all their structures in the area were destroyed.

The Director Public Relations and Information of the Air Force, (NAF) Air Vice Marshal Olatokunbo Adesanya,

said the attacks were carried out with fighter jets and rocket launchers.

AVM Adesanya said, in a statement to which he attached a declassified video footage of the operation, that the combined clearance operations "are aimed at preventing the full-scale resurgence of BHT (Boko Haram Terrorists) in the Sambisa general area."

The raid was launched on Wednesday.

He said: "On the first day of the combined clearance operations, the Air Task Force conducted intensive bombardments on selected BHT locations, preparatory to the commencement of the operation."

"The air attacks set several BHT structures ablaze and destroyed them. On the same day, the Air Task Force conducted air interdiction on another BHT hideout near CAMP ZAIRO."

"The air strikes caused the destruction of more BHT structures and the neutralization of several insurgents. Some insurgents were sighted fleeing the area and they were taken out in subsequent follow-up attacks."

Buhari Osinbajo