

Boko Haram hits Chibok as fighter jets pound ISWAP

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From Okodili Ndidi, Abuja

- *Many killed, houses razed*
- *Buhari promises freedom for Leah on second anniversary*

There appears to be no let up in the insurgency being spearheaded by Boko Haram in Borno State.

On Tuesday, the group attacked Chibok, the Southern Borno town, where they abducted 276 school children from their hostel on April 14, 2014.

More than five years after, 112 of the girls are still missing. No fewer than 107 girls have been found or released as part of a deal between the Federal Government and the terrorist group.

Before last night's attack, the town had been hit in other instances.

Boko Haram terrorists stormed Korongilum Community in Chibok Local Government in convoy of gun trucks and motorcycles.

The heavily-armed insurgents entered the community around 6pm when the villagers were returning from the farm and opened fire on residents. They killed many people and injured others.

A lot of houses were also razed by the rampaging terrorists who operated for some hours unchallenged.

Army Spokesman Col. Sagir Musa could not be reached last night to speak on the attack.

Spokesperson of Operation Lafiya Dole, Col. Isa Ado, also did not pick calls made to his line at about 10:30pm.

Sources within the military, however, said troops were on top of the situation and had restored normalcy to the community.

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Last week, Boko Haram killed more than 30 people when they attacked Borno town Auno near Maiduguri, the Borno State capital.

The terrorists swooped on travellers who were stranded at the checkpoint closed by the military because of a 5pm curfew.

They also set ablaze vehicles and houses. President Muhammadu Buhari who was away in Ethiopia when the attack occurred visited Maiduguri on his way home, to commiserate with the government and people.

He declined to comment on the casualty figure or the level of havoc on the community.

Also yesterday, the Nigerian Air Force (NAF) announced that it had destroyed another Islamic State of West Africa Province (ISWAP) training camp at Tumbun Zarami on the fringes of the Lake Chad in Borno State.

NAF Director of Public Relations and Information Air Commodore Ibikunle Daramola said the operation was conducted on Sunday by the Air Task Force (ATF) of Operation Lafiya Dole.

"The mission was conducted on Feb. 16, after successive days of Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) missions as well as intelligence reports from multiple sources, including the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) Headquarters," he said.

According to him, intelligence reports revealed that training activities were being carried out in and around some makeshift structures hidden under the shrubbery within the settlement.

"Consequently, the ATF detailed its attack aircraft to engage the "Training Camp 4", scoring accurate hits which led to the destruction of the suspected camp commander's house as well as some other structures within the camp," he said.

Commodore Daramola said the NAF, operating in concert with surface forces, would sustain its air campaign to shape the battlespace in the North East for the conduct of further operations.

Tuesday was the second anniversary of the kidnapping of 107 Dapchi school girls in Yobe State. One of them who is still with the terrorists is Leah Sharibu. President Muhammadu Buhari used the occasion to reiterate the commitment of his administration to the release of all children and captives of terrorists across the country and beyond.

In a message he personally signed, Buhari said: “Two years ago, 110 innocent children from the town of Dapchi were taken, against their will, by terrorists of Boko Haram, 107 survived the ordeal. Today all but one – Leah Sharibu – are returned to their families.

“Now aged 16, Leah remains in the hands of the terrorists – they say because she refuses to renounce her Christian faith.

“We say, as the government for and of all Nigerians, that no person has the right to force another to change their faith against their will and that all life is sacred.

“This government continues and seeks to secure the release of all children and captives of terrorists – and we do so regardless of their creed or the name of their creator.

“As we redouble our efforts for Leah’s return, we can never allow the terrorists to divide us – Christian against Muslim, Muslim against Christian. We are all Sons of Abraham. And all Nigerians have the same worth and rights before the law, and before God.”

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