

One dead in soldiers' attack on COVID-19 committee in Borno

June 14, 2020 in **Featured, News, News Update**

0

By Moses Emorinken, Abuja and Agency Report

- ***501 new cases recorded in 24 hours***
- ***NCDC releases guideline for reopening of worship centres***
- ***51 medical officers, 17 inmates test positive in Bauchi***

Enforcement of the COVID-19 induced interstate travel ban turned bloody in Borno State yesterday after armed soldiers attacked the State's COVID-19 Committee at a checkpoint in the state.

A driver attached to the Rapid Response Squad in the state was killed during the incident.

Four other persons were injured.

Five hundred and one new cases of the deadly virus were recorded across the country yesterday, the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) said in a late night update.

Lagos State alone has 195 of the latest infections.

The soldiers, attached to the 7 Division of the Army and driving in three Hilux gun trucks had run into the COVID-19 travel ban enforcement team led by the state Attorney General, Malam Kakashehu Lawal, and Commissioner for Health, Dr Salisu Kwaya-Bura .

Lawal, who spoke to newsmen on the incident, alleged that the soldiers, in a bid to force their way through, pulled down the barricade erected across the road to prevent non-essential travellers from entering the state.

He said that the troops claimed to be on a mission to repel Boko Haram attack on Gubio, struck the convoy of the Rapid Response Squad (RRS) enforcing the lockdown.

He said that the impact of the collision propelled the RRS Hilux vehicle down the roadway.

The RRS vehicle summersaulted and killed its driver, injuring three other security men.

Lawal said: "After hitting the vehicle, the soldiers pointed their guntrucks at us and began assaulting us.

"One of the soldiers looked at me and told me 'to hell with democracy, useless democracy'.

"Others raised their guns at us, while one of them removed the cap of a policeman attached to the team.

"A cameraman attached to the team from the Deputy Governor's office was also attacked and beaten while his camera was seized by the soldiers."

Kakashehu said he had asked the policemen in his team to remain calm even as the rampaging soldiers assaulted them.

"Why we stood our ground at the scene was to call on journalists and the military authorities to come and witness what was happening so they could bring an end to the impunity.

"As Nigerians, the mission and vision of the Buhari-led administration and also the Chief of Army Staff is to save the lives and property of the people.

"So we cannot just allow a chunk of military men to cause any form of harassment when people are there on their official responsibility," Lawan said.

Read Also: COVID-19, Lagos and Nigeria

It took the efforts of the state Deputy Governor, Alhaji Usman Kadafur, and the Garrison Commander of 7 Division, Brig.-Gen. Sunday Igbinomwanhia, to bring the situation under control.

Also speaking, the commissioner for health told the military commander that the soldiers pointed a gun at him after he identified himself.

He added that the soldiers allowed other motorists to enter the town without undergoing any COVID-19 test; an action he said could hamper efforts of government in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic.

Kwaya-Bura explained that the state had so far recorded more than 400 coronavirus cases.

"Yesterday alone, more than 40 persons who travelled into the state were COVID-19 positive. This prompted the committee's decision to come and impose the lockdown on this road today," he said.

Meanwhile, Kadafur, who doubles as the Chairman of the COVID-19 Committee, condemned the incident, describing it as "unfortunate".

He said that when the incident was reported to him, he quickly alerted the Garrison Commander to come to the scene in order to restore calm.

"In a situation like this, you have to look at the psyche of the individuals involved because it may be me that is attacked tomorrow," he said.

The deputy governor urged the military to investigate the incident to avoid a reoccurrence.

Reacting, Igbinomwanhia apologised to the COVID-19 team over the incident.

He assured that the army would set up a commission of enquiry to investigate the incident and vowed to punish erring soldiers.

Nigeria records 501 new cases of COVID-19

The Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) in its update on coronavirus last night gave the breakdown of the 501 fresh cases as follows: Lagos-195; FCT-50; Kano-42; Kaduna-27; Edo-26; Oyo-22; Imo-21; Gombe-17; Benue-12; Enugu-12; Delta-11; Anambra-11; Ebonyi-10; Nasarawa-9; Ogun-9; Bauchi-8; Kebbi-4; Akwa Ibom-3; Jigawa-3; Katsina-3; Yobe-2; Borno-2; Kwara-1; and Ondo-1.

Overall, Nigeria has recorded 15,682 cases.

Five thousand one hundred and seven cases have been discharged while 407 deaths have been recorded.

NCDC releases guidelines for reopening of worship centres

The Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) yesterday released guidelines for the reopening of places of worship as the easing of the COVID-19 lockdown continues.

Worshippers are required to wear face masks and must wash and sanitize their hands when entering and leaving the worship places.

The NCDC said: "There should be no entry without facemasks. All attendees and religious leaders must wear face masks. People who are sick should not go to places of worship. There should be temperature screening on entry.

"Hand washing facilities and hand sanitizers should be provided at point of entries and strategic points.

"Attendance at religious settings should not exceed one-third of sitting capacity, and religious centres should be clearly marked such that people sit and maintain two metres distance from each other.

"There should be no form of direct contact. Practices such as handshakes as peace signs are discouraged.

"Practices that require sharing of materials should be limited. For example, ablution should be performed at home.

"Religious centres should be disinfected routinely, before and after worship."

51 medical officers, 17 inmates test positive in Bauchi

The Executive Chairman, Bauchi State Primary Healthcare Development Agency (BASPHCDA), Dr Rilwanu Mohammed, announced yesterday that 51 medical officers have so far tested positive for coronavirus in the state.

Mohammed told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Bauchi that 17 inmates of the correctional facility in the state also tested positive.

The chairman, however, lamented that one of the medical personnel lost his life to the virus in the line of duty.

The BASPHCDA boss said an isolation centre had been established in the correctional facility to ensure that no inmate escape.

Edo records 28 new cases, two deaths, discharges 16 more patients

The Edo State Government announced two new deaths resulting from coronavirus (COVID-19) complications and the discharge of 16 more patients after testing negative to the virus.

The state also recorded 28 new cases of the virus with 13 confirmed at the Irrua Specialist Hospital (ISTH) laboratory and 15 at the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH) laboratory.

With the new figures, Edo has now recorded a total of 27 COVID-19 related deaths, 130 discharged persons, 1,741 line-listed contacts, 4,217 suspected cases and 518 confirmed cases.

Governor Godwin Obaseki said in a statement that the state government would continue to intensify efforts aimed at curtailing the spread of the virus and ensuring the health and safety of Edo people.

The governor, however, urged residents to be cautious and abide by all health and safety precautions to protect all citizens, especially the elderly, noting that the aged are the most endangered by the pandemic.