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Military, B/Haram in fierce battle for Bama •Over 100 killed •Attack being repelled —Military •Dusk to dawn curfew in Maiduguri

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📅 02.Sep.2014 | DISQUS_COMMENTS | 👤 Chris Agbambu and James Bwala



THERE was fierce battle between troops of the Nigerian military and members of the Boko Haram sect, on Monday, over the soul of Bama town, in Borno State.

Reports reaching the Nigerian Tribune, as of press time, indicated that fierce battle was ongoing between the military and the Boko Haram insurgents in the town.

There were claims and counter-claims by both parties over the state of the town, with the military stating earlier that it was repelling attacks by members of the sect, while the Boko Haram said it had already captured and taken over Bama.

Confirming the attack, the Defence headquarters said security forces were repelling the attack in Bama, adding that everything would be done to contain the terrorists.

Speaking through its Twitter handle, Defence headquarters said Bama attack was being repelled, adding that “we cannot state casualty figure now. Everything necessary will be done to contain the terrorists.”

Earlier on Monday, Nigerian Tribune gathered from sources within the Nigerian Army that the new caliphate declared by the Boko Haram leader, Abubakar Shekau, had fallen and abandoned.

This, the sources said, was as a result of exchange of fire power between fighters of the Islamic group and Nigerian military.

It was gathered that hundreds of the fighters on the side of the terrorists group were killed, while hundreds more took to their heels in the ensued battle with the Nigerian forces.

But the latest report in the evening indicated that Boko Haram members came back in larger number, took over the town and hoisted their flag.

Nigerian Tribune, who saw over 5,000 people that fled Bama and Konduga local government areas in the early hours of Monday, around the University of Maiduguri, also gathered that sect members, who fled Gwoza town, stormed Bama in the early hours of Monday, with the intention of taking over the area, but met resistance from the military.

Earlier plans by the Boko Haram insurgents were rebuffed by Nigerian troops, who put up a stiff resistance, leading to several hours of gun battle.

Alhaji Bulama, one of those who escaped the clash between the military and sect members, told the Nigerian Tribune in Maiduguri that security operatives engaged the Boko Haram in a bid to rescue Bama, adding that many of the terrorists were killed.

“Our security forces are good fighters. I think they were given the privilege to fight these bad elements or they are trying to change wrong reports that they have been running away from the Boko Haram.

“I saw a Mopol who was wounded and was being taken to hospital in Maiduguri, but I did not see any casualty on the side of the security operatives before we left the town,” he said.

This came as the military imposed curfew on Maiduguri, the state capital, by deploying its men and weapon in the town.

A security official, who was not authorised to speak to press, told the Nigerian Tribune that the military was also preparing and reinforcing its men to take over Madagali.

He confirmed that fighter jets had started bombarding the surrounding mountains and forest leading to Limankara and Gwoza areas.

He did not, however, speak on what informed the renewed fighting spirit in the military but said “we are fighting war and this is our job.”

The development in Maiduguri, Nigerian Tribune gathered, followed both air and ground military offensive against the

Islamic sect, Boko Haram, which had captured Gwoza Local Government in Borno State and subsequently declaring the area an Islamic caliphate.

Maiduguri, as reported, is gradually coming close to attack by the Islamic terrorists group, Boko Haram.

A commander of the terrorist group, who captured Gwoza town in Borno State and Madagali in Adamawa State, had told the residents being held hostage in Madagali camp that the sect was warming up to attack Maiduguri.

According to a government official, who went to the camp in Madagali to share relief items, the insurgents had over 50 Hilux vehicle and 11 armoured personnel carriers, which they seized from military in Gwoza and other operations.

The officials said a commander, called Abu Suleiman, also told the people that members of the sect would march to Maiduguri anytime.

"We have over 16,000 fighters from different camps in Marte, Ngambaru Ngala and Dikwa in the north Borno.

"Gwoza and Madagali in southeastern part of Borno. Damboa, Hawul in southern Borno and Buni Yadi in Yobe State from western part of Borno, where we hope to advance, with the aim to capture Maiduguri from all sides," Suleiman was quoted to have said.

In a press statement signed and issued by Deputy Director, Army Public Relations, Division 7, Maiduguri, Colonel Sani Usman Maiduguri and made available to journalists on Monday, the military reviewed forward, curfew hours imposed on Maiduguri metropolis and environs.

"It is now to 'blast' from 7.00 p.m. to 6.00 a.m. daily. All must comply with this directive. Any one found flouting this directive will be arrested, dealt with decisively and prosecuted," the statement read.

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