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Airstrikes Against Insurgents In Borno Not Tagged At Civilians — Military

- Says operations guided by rules of engagement

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LATEST NEWS



The Armed Forces of Nigeria, AFN, on Tuesday, debunked the reports in a session of the media indicating that the airstrikes conducted by the Air Task Force of Operation LAFIYA DOLE at Shokotoko Village in Damboa Local Government Area of Borno State last week Thursday, inadvertently led to the deaths of some civilians in the area.

In a statement made available to newsmen in Abuja by the coordinator, Defence Media Operations, Major General John Enenche, the AFN urged the members of the public to ignore such misleading reports.

According to the statement, “the operation, which was conducted on the night of 9th April and early hours of 10 April 2020, was based on credible intelligence reports, obtained from land forces and other security agencies as well as reliable, vetted informants, which confirmed that the target location was occupied solely by Boko Haram terrorists.



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“Moreover, as customary, the attack helicopter that executed the mission was accompanied by an Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) aircraft to ensure proper targeting for the avoidance of collateral damage.

“Besides, it must be noted that, Nigerian Air Force (NAF) pilots, by training and in line with extant Rules of Engagement (ROEs) for the operation, do not attack any location if it is observed that non-combatants, especially women and children, are present.

“In such cases, the pilots would rather return to base with their munitions unexpended. Consequently, on the strength of the foregoing, the location was considered a legitimate target.”

Tribune Online reports that the statement, however, pointed out that in order to allay public concerns occasioned by the aforementioned media reports, an investigation is currently being carried out, adding that subsequent actions would be taken in line with extant regulations and best practices while remaining accountable to the Nigerian people.

The AFN, therefore, reassured the general public that in keeping with its professional responsibility, it would continue to work assiduously to rid the North East of all terrorist elements with a view to facilitating a return to normalcy that would enable Nigerians in the area pursue their legitimate aspirations.

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