

YACIHS

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Troops kill 22 Boko Haram, ISWAP terrorists in Lake Chad, arrest 17

Muhammad Sabiu | Kaduna

THE Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) has disclosed that it has killed 22 Boko Haram and Islamic State of West Africa Province (ISWAP) terrorists around Mallam Fatori town, towards the fringes of Lake Chad.

This was contained in a statement issued by its Chief of Military Public Information, Colonel Muhammad Dole, in Kaduna, on Thursday.

Colonel Dole said the operation, which was designed to end the decade long menace of insurgency in the Lake Chad region, was carried out along with troops from Sector 3 Monoguno (Nigeria) and Sector 4 Diffa (Niger Republic).

According to the statement, the troops met strong resistance from the terrorists, who launched several mortar attacks, laid Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) along the troops' route of advance and further attacked with Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Devices (VBIEDs).

He, however, said the troops brought superior fire power to bear on the insurgents, forcing them to abandon their enclaves. Colonel Dole added that *Operation Sharan Fage* was massively supported by the air component of *Operation Hadin Kai* and other partners with air assets and surveillance equipment.

"This support spurred the determined troops to successfully clear enemy hideouts in and around Arege, Gashigar, Asaga, Kainoa, Bana and Kamagunma, among other general areas.

"In the course of this operation, 22 Boko Haram terrorists were neutralised, five of their gun trucks destroyed, five motorcycles and several logistic bunkers were destroyed, while eight AK-47 rifles were recovered.

"Regrettably, six members of the JTF (two officers and four other ranks) from both countries paid the supreme sacrifice in the line of duty with about 16 wounded in action.

"Seventeen suspects were arrested in the general area of operations and are being profiled.

"The recently-concluded operation, which was heavily supported by *Operation Hadin Kai* (Nigeria), targeted Boko Haram/ISWAP criminal terrorists hibernating in the vicinity of Mallam Fatori town towards the fringes of Lake Chad.

"In line with its mandate of support for facilitating willing internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees to return voluntarily and safely to their ancestral homes, the MNJTF provided security for the continuous security enhancement work in this area and would do so until the inhabitants return.

"The operation also created favourable atmosphere under which the festivities marking the 63rd anniversary of the proclamation of the Republic of Niger was peacefully conducted on December 18, in Diffa, with President Mohamed Bazoum in attendance. It should be noted that this was the first such celebration in many years."

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