

Three officers, 22 soldiers killed in Niger ambush, says DHQ

Two pilots, two crew members, seven wounded soldiers died in helicopter crash

Military neutralised 28 terrorists, apprehended 113 others, rescue 82 hostages

THE Defence Headquarters (DHQ), on Thursday, provided detail on the soldiers killed in an ambush and the crash of Nigerian Air Force (NAF) MI17 helicopter in Niger State, on Monday.

Director, Defence Media Operations, Major-General Edward Buba, who made this disclosure while briefing journalists, hinted that a total of 36 officers and soldiers were involved in the two incidents.

Buba said three officers and 22 soldiers paid the supreme price in the ambush in Zungeru.

According to the *News Agency of Nigeria (NAN)*, Buba explained that while seven were wounded in action, the NAF helicopter was on a mission to evacuate the deceased and wounded troops when it crashed at Chukuba area of Shiroro Local Government Area of the state.

He said the crashed helicopter was conveying 14 bodies of the previously killed soldiers and the seven wounded ones

as well the two pilots and two crew members on board.

Buba stated: "The ambush and the fire fight resulted in the death of three officers, 22 soldiers, while seven were wounded in action. As a result of this, there was need for casualty evacuation whereby the air force helicopter was dispatched while that operation was on and inbound to Kaduna, the helicopter crashed.

"It crashed with 14 of the previously killed in action personnel at the ambush, seven of the previously wounded in action personnel at the ambush, two pilots of the helicopter and two crew members.

In his contribution, the Director of Public Relations and Information for NAF, Air Commodore Edward Gabkwet, said the cause of the crash was yet to be determined, saying operations were ongoing to unravel the cause of the accident.

Gabkwet urged the public to be wary of the kind of things they send on social media, saying they should not allow

themselves to be used as communication equipment to spread propaganda by enemies of the state.

He said military had continued to be open about its operations, adding that accidents in military operations was nothing to be ashamed of, as an organisation.

"We are fighting an insurgency and if anybody thinks insurgency is something that is tackled in such an easy way, then you should go back to the history books and find out how other nations have been facing the same problem. What we see in other countries is the citizens of those countries rallying around their armed forces and supporting them," Gabkwet remarked.

Meanwhile, Buba also hinted that the troops of the Nigeria Armed Forces, had in the last two weeks neutralised 28 terrorists, apprehended 113 and rescued 82 victims in various operations across the country.

He explained that the apprehended suspects comprised 92 terrorists, six gun runners,

three kidnappers, six collaborators and seven perpetrators of oil theft.

Buba added that the troops also recovered 108 weapons and 564 ammunition, comprising 22 AK47 rifles, one PKT gun, six pump action guns, four dane guns, one fabricated rifle, one galil ace rifle, one RGP bomb, one RPG tube and 44 hand grenades.

"Also recovered are 322 rounds of 7.62mm special, 63 rounds of 12.7mm ammo, 12 rounds of 5.6mm ammo, 33 AK47 magazines, one empty case of 7.62mm special and 3 empty magazines.

"Other items include; 14 motorcycles, 16 mobile phones, 3 motorolla radio, one boafeng radio, 2 motorcycle tyres, 5 torch lights, 2 solar panels, 104 livestock and the sum of N2.8 million," he said.

Buba said the troops in the Niger Delta area discovered and destroyed 36 dugout pits, 62 wooden boats, 73 storage tanks, one vehicle and 75 cooking ovens during the period.

He added that the troops also impounded four pumping machines, five outboard engines and 33 illegal refining sites, as well as recovery of 1,166,900 litres of stolen crude oil, 1,491,250 litres of illegally refined AGO, 54,750 litres of DPK and 800 litres of PMS.

In the North East, Buba said the troops of Operation Hadin Kai eliminated seven terrorists, arrested five and rescued 31 hostages while 28 family members of the Boko Haram/ISWAP terrorists comprising of nine adult females and 19 children were also rescued and taken into custody.

He said the troops recovered; 20 AK47 rifles, one FN rifle, one galileo rifle, three dane guns, one AK47 rifle loaded with 17 rounds of 7.62mm special, 154 rounds of 7.62mm special, 63 rounds of 12.7mm ammo, among others.

In the North Central, Buba said the troops of Operation Safe Haven eliminated two gunmen, rescued two hostages and arrested six kidnappers as well as recovered arms

and ammunitions during the period.

He said the troops apprehended a notorious kidnapper gang leader and other foot soldiers at Mangu and Bokkos Local Government Areas of Plateau.

In the North West, Buba said that troops of Operation Hadarin Daji had continued to degrade the terrorists in Katsina, Kaduna, Sokoto and Zamfara States.

He said the troops neutralised 13 terrorists, arrested seven, two informants and two collaborators as well as rescued 16 hostages and recovery of seven AK47 rifles, one PKT gun, one AK47 rifle loaded with 18 rounds of 7.62mm special, five AK47 magazines and 20 rounds of 7.62mm special.

In the South East, he said the troops of Operation UDOKA eliminated three IPOB/ESN terrorists recovered four pump action guns, one single barrel loaded with 100 live cartridges, one locally fabricated rifle and three live cartridges.

G-Kala rains cash rewards