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# 29 babies, 211 B'Haram suspects die in detention – AI

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**Olaleye Aluko, Abuja**

The Amnesty International said 240 persons, including 29 babies, who were fleeing from the Boko Haram insurgents in Borno State, were arrested by the Nigerian Army and died in military detention in the last one year.

The AI, in its 2016/2017 report published on Tuesday, alleged that the victims, from Banki and Bama areas of the state, were clamped in overcrowded cells, adding that the humanitarian crisis caused by the Boko Haram insurgents had affected more than 14 million people in the North-East.



The Defence Headquarters, Abuja, on Wednesday, however, refuted the AI's report, saying it was full of fabrications and an attempt to ridicule the military.

The Director, Defence Information, Brig. Gen. Rabe Abubakar, said the AI lied about its figures, adding that the organisation did not praise the efforts and sacrifices of Nigerian soldiers.

The AI, in its report to review the last one year, said the 240 persons who died in military detention, were secretly buried by the officials of the Borno State Government.

The report partly read, "The military arbitrarily arrested thousands of young men, women and children who fled to the safety of recaptured towns, including Banki and Bama, Borno State. These arrests were largely based on random profiling of men, rather than on reasonable suspicion.

"The mass arrests by the military of people fleeing the Boko Haram led to overcrowding in military detention facilities. At the military facility in Giwa Barracks, Maiduguri, cells were overcrowded. Diseases, dehydration and starvation were rife.

"At least, 240 detainees died during the year. Bodies were secretly buried in Maiduguri's cemetery by the Borno State Environmental Protection Agency workers. Among the dead were at least 29 children, aged between newborn and five years."

The report added that Nigeria still had 2 million Internally Displaced Persons in the North-East.

the year...  
Haram's control. In its response to the attacks, the military continued to carry out arbitrary arrests, detentions, ill-treatment and extrajudicial executions of people suspected of being Boko Haram fighters.

“There remained at least 2 million IDPs in northern Nigeria. Eighty per cent of them live in host communities, while the remainder lived in camps. The camps in Maiduguri are overcrowded, with inadequate access to food, clean water and sanitation,” it added.

But the DHQ spokesman, Abubakar, said the AI's report was full of fabrications and ridiculous.

He said, “The report published by the AI alleging death of 240 people in Borno and 177 pro-Biafran agitators is a spurious fabrication, aimed at tarnishing the image of the military. The allegations are inconceivable and have no place in the military. The report is a lie and orchestrated to ridicule the armed forces.

“The military has an open door in terms of information on the North-East. The military rejects this AI reports in its entirety and appeals to all to disregard it. We reassure our citizens of our commitment to terminate the security challenges facing our country.”

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