

Boko Haram leader, Shekau, injured, others killed in air strike

Published May 4, 2017

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Abubakar Shekau

Olaleye Aluko with agency report

A factional leader of the Boko Haram terrorists, Abubakar Shekau, might have been injured in an air strike by the Nigerian Air Force on Balla village, near Damboa in the Sambisa Forest area of Borno State.

A source close to the Boko Haram insurgents told *Agence France Presse* on Wednesday that one of Shekau's deputies, identified as Abba Mustapha, was among several Boko Haram leaders killed in the air strike.

It was learnt that two fighter jets bombed the insurgents, while they gathered for prayers in Balla village, which is about 40 kilometres from Damboa on the fringes of the Sambisa Forest.

“Shekau was wounded in the bombings and is believed to be receiving treatment near the Nigerian border with Cameroon around Kolofata. His deputy, Abba Mustapha, alias Malam Abba, was killed in the attack, along with another key lieutenant, Abubakar Gashua.

“Shekau was injured and a number of his commanders killed. They fell heavily because the bombs hit them while attending Friday prayers,” the source told AFP.

The NAF Director of Public Relations and Information, Air Commodore Olatokunbo Adesanya, told our correspondent on Wednesday that investigations were ongoing to ascertain the identities of the Boko Haram leaders killed.

The spokesman added that he could not confirm if Shekau was killed in the bombing.

He stated, “It is true that the strike killed some Boko Haram leaders. We do not have their identities yet and investigation is ongoing to unravel that aspect. I cannot say whether Shekau was at the place or not. That part is still a rumour.

“The NAF conducted the air interdiction with two Alpha Jets and one F-7Ni aircraft. Battle-damage assessment conducted showed that several Boko Haram leaders and their followers were killed.

“We were able to frustrate an attempt by the insurgents to regroup in the Mangosum area of Sambisa.”