

Army holds private burial for 100 soldiers killed by Boko Haram

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File: Web photo

Eniola Akinkuotu, Abuja

The Nigerian Army has organised a private burial for over 100 officers and soldiers killed during terrorist attacks on Nigerian Army 157 Task Force Battalion last month, *The PUNCH* has learnt.

Our correspondent was told by one of the widows of the officers that the burial would take place in Maiduguri on Friday.

It was, however, learnt that the army wanted the event to be private so that the real number of slain soldiers will not be known.

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One of the widows who did not wish to be identified said, “I was invited for the burial of my husband with a few others this Friday in Maiduguri.

“Sincerely, we don't even know how many will be buried and the army is not giving us any information.”

A colonel, who spoke to our correspondent on condition of anonymity, said the army decided to make the burial private in order to hide the true casualty figure.

He said, “Gen Buratai said only 23 soldiers were killed in the attack. He also put the number of troops wounded in action at 31. However, we all know that is not true. Over 100 were killed and a private burial is now being organised in order not to expose their lies.”

When our correspondent called the Director, Army Public Relations, Brig.Gen Sani Usman, for comment, he cut all calls, asking our correspondent to send a text message instead.

However, he refused to respond to a text message sent to him as of press time.

Lt. Col. Ibrahim Sakaba had died alongside over 100 soldiers on November 18, 2018.

His younger brother, Lt. Yakubu Sakaba, was also killed by Boko Haram on October 5, 2014.

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In a video circulated recently, soldiers deployed in the war-ravaged North-East blamed obsolete equipment and corruption among top military brass for the massive losses in personnel since the latest attacks on military formations began in July.