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Fresh battle: 28 Boko Haram killed in Borno

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BY TIMOTHY OLANREWAJU, MAIDUGURI ON OCTOBER 21, 2014

COVER, NATIONAL

• We won't allow insurgents kill our soldiers – Military

No fewer than 28 Boko Haram fighters were killed in a fresh clash with the Nigerian troops in Borno State, just as the Federal Government yesterday resumed talks with the armed group in neighbouring Chad Republic. Sources said a group of daring Boko Haram fighters had attempted to recapture Damboa Sunday evening, nearly two months after the military reclaimed the ruined town.

Damboa, about 85 kilometres southwest of Maiduguri, Borno State capital, was taken over by Boko Haram on July 17 in a fierce attack, killing about 100 people including the commanding officer of the 195 Reserved Battalion of the Nigerian Army, Colonel Abubakar Shonba and other army and police personnel as well as civilians. The attack also displaced about 12,000 residents.

The insurgents controlled the town until early August when they were dislodged by the military, forcing them to move to Gwoza in the southeastern part of the state where it currently held sway.

The heavily armed insurgents, however, fled to Damboa on Sunday evening with armoured tank in an offensive described by a military officer as failed attempt: "We won't allow them kill our men on the field. We are aware the Federal Government is talking with some of them but when the others are also launching attacks, you don't expect us to just sit down and watch them. We won't allow them kill innocent civilians too."

He confirmed that the insurgents lost more than 30 of their fighters in the failed attack, adding that troops have to be on alert so as not to be taken unaware by the Boko Haram men. He said some arms and a armoured tank were recovered from the attackers.

In Gwoza, sources said the insurgents slaughtered five fleeing villagers who descended from the mountain

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top in search of food and water.

"Our people were killed again at Gava at the foot of the mountain. They came down looking for water and food but were attacked by Boko Haram. Five of them were slaughtered," said Jona Tada, who claimed to be in contact with his brother also on the mountain.

He said the people fled to the mountain following incessant attacks on their communities behind the Gwoza hills. He said the worst of the attacks was in May when nearly 200 people were killed by Boko Haram at Attagara, Agapalawa, Chinene, Chikede and other adjoining communities.

Also in Abadam, north of Borno, the Boko Haram men reportedly returned to the area on Sunday evening three days after the first attack. "They came back again on Sunday though residents have fled the town. They burnt down houses and carted away foodstuffs. Some of them camped at a farmland at the outskirts of the town. They've taken over Abadam now," a police source disclosed.

The take over of Abadam, a serene community at the Nigeria-Niger border North of Borno on Sunday, according to Daily Sun checks, put the number of towns under Boko Haram at seven. The insurgents previously took over Gwoza in the southeastern part of the state, Bama, Banki and Gamboru/Ngala in the central part, Marte and Kireno in the North.

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