

NEWS

200 Boko Haram fighters killed in failed bid to attack Maiduguri

FROM TIMOTHY OLANREWAJU, MAIDUGURI

Determined to overrun Maiduguri, scores of Boko Haram fighters attacked the Borno State capital from three fronts yesterday, but combined efforts of the military and Civilian JTF youths frustrated the terrorists.

More than 200 insurgents were killed while 17 Toyota Hilux vehicles, armoured tank, arms and ammunition were recovered from them.

Governor Kashim Shettima commended the youths vigilante for coming out in large number to assist the soldiers in repelling the attack.

The insurgents had attempted to storm the city from three fronts at the outskirts of the capital in the early hours of yesterday, similar

to last Sunday's attack but were met with resistance from the troops and combat-ready youth vigilante.

Heavy gunshots were heard from different locations around the city at about 6.30am, causing panic among residents. However, the huge number of youth vigilante moving into the battle areas and quick deployment of troops by the military saved the situation. The battle lasted till mid-day as witnesses said some in-

surgents fled after more than 200 of their men fell in battle.

A military source said intelligence has shown the planned attack by the insurgents during the weekend. The source said security forces were ready and had put all measures on ground to ensure the insurgents did not succeed. "They attempted to enter through Jahuri around Njimtilo where they attacked last week, but we clampdown on them. Then they fled to Mulle (southwest

of Maiduguri) but our men were there. Many of the insurgents were killed at Mulle and from then, another group of Boko Haram started firing from Ngom along Mafa (east of Maiduguri)," the source said. He said others fled to Maffa even as military pursued them for what the source called "a bigger battle."

Spokesman of the Civilian JTF, Bar Jubrin Gumda, praised the soldiers and youth vigilante for their gallantry.

He told reporters in Maiduguri that the military "rose to the occasion to defend the city from Boko Haram invasion," adding that the civilian JTF also motivated the military troops with their courage and resolve to fight headlong.

"Boko Haram came to attack with many motorcycles and vehicles from three fronts to attack Maiduguri but they met their Waterloo," Gumda said. He disclosed that the military grounded 17 Hilux vehicles belonging to the insurgents and some motorcycles.

Sources at the State Specialists Hospital, Maiduguri said three civilians were brought to the hospital dead while more than 37 injured residents have been admitted in the three government hospitals in the city. "Some of them were hit by stray bullets," the source said. A rocket propelled grenade suspected to have been fired by Boko Haram fell on a house near a popular government hotel, killing three. Relations of the deceased told *Daily Sun* the deceased were in front of a sachet water factory when the incident occurred.

Meanwhile, Gov Shettima commended the youth vigilante for coming out en masse to defend Maiduguri from being captured by Boko Haram. The governor, in a statement signed by his spokesman, Isa Gusau, said the support given the military by the youth volunteers was encouraging, calling it uncommon courage.

Confirming the routing of the terrorists yesterday, Director, Defence Information, Major-Gen. Chris Olukolade, said in a statement that "the terrorists who in their disarray strayed towards Bama, Ngom, Alou, Delwa and Mafa in the night have now been effectively contained. Mopp-up operation is ongoing."

"Several weapons, arms and ammunition including two armoured vehicles and two artillery guns as well as 17 Hilux vehicles have been captured from them. Several terrorists also died."

"The affected locations have been secured and soldiers wounded are being treated. Patrols and pursuit of fleeing terrorists is continuing in coordination with allied forces. Meanwhile, the terrorists attack on Maiduguri in the early hours of Sunday was quickly contained. The terrorists incurred massive casualty. The situation is calm as mopp-up operation in the affected area is ongoing," he said.

According to him, "the operation is in coordination with activities in the Multinational Joint Task Force. The terrorists are meant to be engaged in all fronts including their previous havens and hide-outs in the region."

"It is in line with the arrangement for a comprehensive and coordinated military operation with inputs by military forces in the Lake Chad Basin Commission namely Nigeria, Chad, Niger, and Cameroon," he said.



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