

Soldiers record major breakthrough in Borno

• Obasanjo playing to the gallery - Military

The Nigerian military yesterday recorded a major breakthrough in its renewed onslaught against Boko Haram, with the successful flushing out of insurgents from Monguno, Mante and other neighbouring communities in Borno State.

Monguno was captured by the insurgents last month when they launched multiple attacks on Maiduguri, the state capital, from different entry points.

According to a statement by Major-General Chris Olukolade, Director of Defence Information, the recapture of Monguno was achieved with a "military operation spearheaded by highly coordinated air assaults."

He stated that in the onslaught, 'a number of terrorists as well as truck loads of rice, beans and other logistics meant for resupply to the terrorists operating around Baga have been captured in the course of operation.'

Olukolade stated that the insurgents suffered high casualty, with the recovery of arms, revealing that the military had established a cordon and engaging in search of the recaptured communities.

"The air and land operation is continuing with aggressive advance towards other designated communities and locations meant to be cleared in the ongoing offensive against the terrorists," Olukolade stated.

Meanwhile, a few days after former President Olusegun Obasanjo accused President Goodluck Jonathan of planning to use the military to extend his tenure, the Defence Headquarters (DHQ) has, promised that soldiers will continue to discharge their duties with high-level professionalism.

In a statement posted on its blog,

www.defenceinfo.mil.ng yesterday, the military authorities said as an institution, it is neither "as inept in the discharge of its duties, nor is it being misused for political ends in the manner the retired General Obasanjo who is also a former President, has possibly been made to believe."

The Defence Headquarters said although the leadership and a cross-section of the military "believe that the former President and retired General has every right to be interested in the actions and fate of the military," it is "noteworthy that most of his utterances lately indicate an attitude of playing to the gallery or indulging in politicisation of serious national security or military affairs."

Recalling how Obasanjo alleged that the postponement of the general elections was to enable President Jonathan to use the service chiefs to plot a tenure extension, the military said this claim was "very surprising, considering the fact that the retired General chose to ignore the clarification and emphatic assurances of non-partisanship of the military as declared in a DHQ statement on the position of the Armed Forces in the ongoing political activities. His motive, as usual, remains unknown, but it is certainly less than noble or well-intentioned. We dare say again that Chief Obasanjo's assertions are false."

Saying that inasmuch as it would not disrespect Obasanjo, the Defence Headquarters said: "It has become necessary to point out that his (Obasanjo's) conduct and unguarded utterances of late have fallen short of the standard of discipline expected of an individual who has had the privilege of service in the military and risen to the status of a General. The behaviour of retired

General (Chief) Obasanjo has been so unbecoming and continues to constitute a serious embarrassment to the military before all who have reasonably and rightly adjudged the essence of military background in terms of the high value and standard it tends to contribute to statesmanship."

It advised Obasanjo to be genuinely interested in the growth and sustenance of Nigeria's democratic credentials, adding: "He is also enjoined to endeavour to improve in his understanding of intricate issues and try to encourage the military rather than continue with this tendency to indulge in imputation of ulterior motives to every effort, all for the purpose of discrediting well thought out policies or decisions related to the military's roles in the polity."

"The support of all well-meaning elderly Nigerians remains vital in the onerous duty of working for the stability, defence, and peace of our country under duly constituted authorities in a democratic environment," the DHQ said.



Olukolade