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Boko Haram: Army, Amnesty disagree over alleged rights violation

• Soldiers destroy sect's store, market, rescue 195

From Molly Kilete, Abuja

THE Nigerian Army and Amnesty International have disagreed over alleged human rights violation in the fight against Boko Haram in the North- East

Regardless, the army has taken the first step by calling for a through investigation in allegations of rights violation levelled against some military personnel engaged in the insurgency war.

Amnesty has said it will not accept anything less.

Its Africa Director of Research and Advocacy, Netsanet Belay told newsmen after a meeting with the Chief of Army Staff, Lieutenant General Tukur Buratai, held at the army headquarters in Abuja that, even though the army claimed to have investigated most of the allegations levelled against it and has even gone ahead to prosecute the perpetrators, it was still not convinced especially when such investigations were done secretly.

Belay, however, described the meeting between Amnesty and army authorities as very fruitful and a first step taken to address issues raised by the body.

On the allegation of over 20,000, reported cases of human rights violation carried out by military personnel from 2009, to date, Beley said: "We have been carrying out research since the beginning of 2009, and we are still carrying out our research but the scope of our report from 2009 to 2015, and during that period we have been documenting arbitrary arrests, days in detention under military custody, extra judicial executions and other forms of violations."

Meanwhile, Buratai has assured that the Nigerian Army, under his leadership will investigate all cases of human rights abuses brought before it.

Buratai made this known when he commissioned the newly-established Human Rights Desk Office under the Department of Civil-Military Relations at the army headquarters. He said the desk was the first of its kind within the military establishment.

Represented by the Chief of Civil-Military Affairs (CCMA), Major General Rogers Nicholas, Buratai said its establishment was borne of increasing interest of local and international human rights bodies on what the army is doing in the North- East and other parts of the country.

Earlier in the week, the Nigerian Army said its soldiers on counter-insurgency operations in the North- East have destroyed a patent medicine store and a major market being used by Boko Haram group at Gulumba in Borno State.

Army acting Director of Public Relations, Col. Sani Usman, who made this known yesterday, said the soldiers also cleared terrorists' camps at Kwaptara, Mijigete, Garin Boka, Mosole, Ngubdori, Ma'asa, Dukje and Gulumba, all in Dikwa and Bama Local Government Areas of the state.

Usman said the troops from 7 Division Garrison, comprising 112 Battalion and Armed Forces Special Forces, were on a joint clearance patrol of suspected terrorists locations' when it discovered the store and market. He said during the operation, a number of Boko Haram members were killed while several items recovered.

He listed items recovered to include two logistic trucks, 180 motorcycles, 750 bicycles and various perishable and non-perishable items such as a 100 KV Mikano generator and grinding machine.

Usman also said 195 persons held hostage were rescued during the operation

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