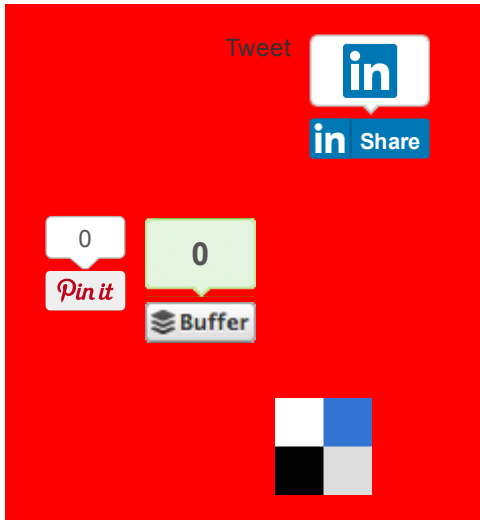


Boko Haram: Another soldier killed near Lake Chad

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Troops rescue 85 women, children in Borno, uncover bomb factory

From Molly Kilete, Abuja

The bid by the military to rout the remnant of the “technically decimated” Boko Haram insurgent in Borno State, at the weekend claimed the life of another soldier.

This was confirmed in a statement by the army spokesman, Col. Sani Usman, yesterday. The death of the soldier whose identity was not revealed came barely 24 hours after the Commanding Officer, 272 Task Force Tank Battalion, Lieutenant-Colonel Muhammad Abu-Ali, was killed in Borno.

However, in the weekend encounter, troops of the 7 Division Nigerian Army, Operation Lafiya Dole, rescued 85 people, comprising mostly women and children held hostage by insurgents in Borno north, bordering southern fringes of the Lake Chad. Col. Usman said the hostages were rescued when the troops conducted “a decisive clearance operation” into the remnants of Boko Haram strategic town of Chukungudu.

Usman said the operation was led by the General Officer Commanding, of the 7 Division, Brig-Gen. Victor Ezugwu, between Friday and Saturday.

“The maneuvering Brigade led by 3 Battalion of 22 Brigade, successfully cleared Geram, Bulankassa and Chukungudu believed to be the Boko Haram terrorists strongholds in that area,” Usman said.

He said the troops killed five terrorists, recovered four rounds of Rocket Propelled Grenade bombs, one Double Barrel Gun, 349 packets containing various rounds of ammunitions, three magazines, a link belt of machine gun ammunition and one AK-47 rifle magazine.

The troops also discovered an Improvised Explosive Device making factory at Geram.

“In the factory, they found several already primed suicide bombers’ vests, a well equipped motor vehicles and motorcycles’ workshop and spare parts warehouse at Chukungudu village.

“The troops recovered three vehicles and several newly acquired motorcycles.”

He said that in line with rules of engagement, the IEDs factory, vehicles and motorcycles had been destroyed.

Meanwhile, the army is set to investigate the death of Lt-Col. Abu-Ali.

The death of the officer, Daily Sun gathered, has rattled the top echelon of the service who believe that some persons within the army may have given the enemies details of how a group of soldiers belonging to the Special Forces trained in Belarus, were moved from Malam Fatori to Maiduguri, on the day of the attack.

A top army source said investigation into the matter has already commenced and some personnel were beginning to tell the authorities what they know.

The source alleged that the issue of Fifth Communist who provided terrorists with intelligence from the military side had been a sore problem.

Sources said Malam Fatori could best be described as the heat of the battle at the moment as the terrorists attack soldiers location almost on a daily basis.

It gave a vivid description of what happened on the day of the incident.

“There was a signal that 50 soldiers of our special forces be withdrawn from Malam Fatomari to Maidiguri for special operations at Sambisa forest. Although we were not happy when we received the signal given the nature of the security situation and the role these special forces soldiers are playing, the soldiers had to comply with the order. Apart from that, one of the senior officer who came to ensure that the troops withdrew from the area was not looking too relaxed when he came as he was in such a hurry that

he even left without his soldiers, which is very unusual.”

Top military Sources said with the killing of Abu-Ali, it was now evident that indeed some persons who are benefitting from the counter insurgency war do not want it to end.

With the death of lieutenant colonel Abu-Ali, the source said the army was left with no other choice but to look into the issue of fifth communist working against the success of the counter insurgency operations.