

# News around the

From **Molly Kilete, Abuja**

**THE** Nigerian Army has said it killed more than 50 members of the Boko Haram terror group and destroyed several high-calibre arms and ammunition in the Lake Chad area in recent operations.

The Army also disclosed that four of its men on counter-insurgency operations in the North East were killed, while nine others sustained serious injuries in an encounter with the terrorists in Borno State.

Director, Army Public Relations, Brigadier-General Sani Usman, who made this known this week, said the incident happened after a Boko Haram vehicle laden with improvised explosive devices (IED) rammed into an MRAP vehicle conveying the soldiers.

Usman said the bodies of the deceased soldiers have been deposited in a mortuary, while the wounded have been taken to 8 Division Medical Services and Hospital, Monguno, for medical attention.

The Army also said the soldiers recovered several other weapons belonging to the terrorists and destroyed their locations in Meteale village, Tumbun Gini and Tumbun Njamena.

Usman said the feat was recorded in the ongoing Operation Deep Punch 2 being conducted in the various sectors. Usman, in the statement, said: "Troops in Operation Lafiya Dole have been making tremendous progress in the ongoing Operation Deep Punch 2 in the various sectors. So far, the troops have neutralised over 50 Boko Haram terrorists, destroyed and captured high-calibre arms and ammunition, especially in the Lake Chad general area.

"Troops, on January 8, 2018, cleared Boko Haram terrorists in Meteale village, Tumbun Gini and Tumbun Njamena. During the clearance operations, Boko Haram terrorists abandoned the area in disarray, leaving behind livestock, large quantity of foodstuff, motorcycles and donkeys. Also, in Meteale, however, the terrorists attempted to attack troops in harbour but this was stiffly resisted with heavy casualty on Boko Haram terrorists.

"Troops neutralised over 57 of them, destroyed gun trucks and other equipment. The gallant troops also discovered terrorists' logistics base at Tumbu Njamena, which held stocks of fish, foodstuffs, fuel and motorcycles. All these items were promptly destroyed.

"Troops also captured one anti-aircraft gun, 116 rounds of 12.7mm ammunition with metal links, four AK-47 rifles,

## Army kills 57 Boko Haram terrorists

57 rounds of 7.62mm ammunition (special), two light machine guns, two rocket-propelled grenade 7 tubes, with one RPG bomb and two already primed 36 hand grenades. Other recovered items

include one small solar panel with a Gionee mobile phone, one Holy Qur'an, six Hadith books as well as five gun trucks (which were destroyed).

"Sadly, four of our troops paid

the supreme price while nine others were wounded in action. Specifically, a Boko Haram vehicle laden with IEDs rammed into an MRAP vehicle, which exploded, killing three soldiers,

a Civilian JTF and wounding the other soldiers. The bodies of the gallant and wounded heroes have been evacuated to 8 Division Medical Services and Hospital, Monguno."

## ...Court grants DSS request to detain 400 Boko Haram suspects for 90 days

From **Godwin Tsa, Abuja**

**A** Federal High Court in Abuja yesterday granted the request by the Department of State Services (DSS) to detain 400 Boko Haram suspects for another 90 days at the Kainji detention camp.

The suspects, who have been in custody for about five years since they were arrested, are to remain in custody until April 10, 2018, when their matter will come up before the court.

Justice Babatunde Quadri granted the request, which was contained in an ex parte motion argued by prosecution counsel, Geraldine Okafor, on the ground that investigation into the terrorism offence allegedly committed by the suspects has not been concluded.

In the said motion, Okafor sub-

mitted that although the suspects were arrested about five years ago, investigation could not be completed because the alleged terrorism offence involved other countries like Niger, Chad and Cameroon.

The suspects were billed to be arraigned before the judge yesterday, but the lawyer informed the court that investigation involved those three foreign countries, Niger, Chad and Cameroon, and a joint task force has just been put in place by authorities in Nigeria and those of the three countries to ensure early completion of investigation into the trans-border terrorism offence.

Justice Quadri was furious about the slow pace of the investigation but the counsel assured the court that the joint task force of the four countries would ensure conclusion of investigation before April 10.

The judge, while granting the request for the additional 90 days to detain the suspects, expressed worry that the suspects had been in detention for over five years and that investigation into their alleged offence ought to have been completed and the suspects arraigned in line with the law.

Justice Quadri said that the world was watching Nigeria in respect of the detained suspects, especially for as long as five years, and that the Federal High Court would not allow itself to be used to perpetuate acts that are against the provisions of the Constitution.

The judge, therefore, charged the DSS to be alive to its responsibilities on the issue of detained persons so as not to run counter to the provisions of the law.

The court recalled that, in 2017, it granted the same request for the

90-day detention of the suspects, adding that, in spite of the nature of the alleged offence, the court would be cautious in granting similar requests in future.

Meanwhile, the court has ordered the Defence Headquarters to produce four Boko Haram suspects before it on April 10 for their formal trial. The four suspects, Mohammed Goni, Mohammed Maaji, Umar Ladan and Abubakar Musa, were to be tried yesterday but Okafor told the court that the suspects could not be produced by the Defence Headquarters, for undisclosed reasons.

The counsel informed the court that the Director of Public Prosecutions wrote the Defence Headquarters to produce the defendants in court but expressed displeasure that it did not act.

She then pleaded with the court to give the Defence Headquarters another opportunity to do the needful.

However, the Legal Aids Council, represented by Samson Adula, pleaded with the court for an order to move the suspects from Kainji detention camp to the DSS facility, in the interest of justice and to enable them have easy access to court for their trial. He lamented that the four Boko Haram suspects have been languishing in detention for over six years without trial.

In his brief ruling, Justice Quadri agreed with the Legal Aids Council and ordered that the four defendants be brought unfailingly before him on April 10, 2018, for continuation of their trial.

## 10 feared dec

From **Femi Folaranmi, Yenagoga**

**THREE** soldiers, attached to the military joint task force, Operation Delta Save (ODS) have been feared killed in a fierce gun battle between militants and the military at Toru-Ndoro community in Ekeremor Local Government Area of Bayelsa State.

Governor Seriake Dickson, after a meeting with top security chiefs in the state and the military high command, had given the nod to the military to move into Toru-Ndoro and rid it of militants with strong link to an

## PHOTO Xpress



INSIDE ST. PETER'S CATHOLIC NURSERY AND PRIMARY SCHOOL, EBUTE-METTA (WEST), LAGOS STATE.