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Insurgents ambush, kill 11 soldiers

7th October 2019 in [Cover](#), [National](#)

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(FILES) This picture taken on April 30, 2013 shows Nigerian troops patrolling in the streets of the remote northeast town of Baga, Borno State. Nigeria's military said on May 16, 2013 that it was ready to launch air strikes against Boko Haram Islamists as several thousand troops moved to the remote northeast to retake territory seized by the insurgents. A force of "several thousand" soldiers along with fighter jets and helicopter gunships have been deployed for the offensive in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa state, he added. AFP PHOTO/PIUS UTOMI EKPEIPIUS UTOMI

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Nigerian soldiers have suffered yet another round of casualties in their patriotic battle to drive out insurgents from the country.

PREMIUM TIMES reported a devastating attack on October 3 in which Boko Haram terrorists killed 11 soldiers and wounded 14 in an ambush on a military convoy in Borno State.

Thirty-four brave troops of 154 Task Force Battalion, including two officers, were on a patrol of Mauli-Borgozo area of battle when Boko Haram fighters unleashed terror on their convoy, killing 11 and wounding 14.

The battle began at about 11:25 a.m., but it was unclear how long it lasted before the terrorists disappeared. Two soldiers were declared missing in action as part of the attack, military sources said under anonymity.

The injured, including an officer, have all been evacuated to the Nigerian Army medical centre in Maiduguri. They were administered first aid at the Benisheik Super Camp in Borno.



The terrorists stole 11 AK-47 rifles from the soldiers they killed. They also made away with an anti-aircraft gun truck.

A gun truck and a military lorry used in conveying officers and equipment were damaged by the insurgents.

Locals said at least 15 civilians were killed in the attack; it was unclear if any of them belonged to Boko Haram. A spokesperson for the Nigerian Army did not return requests for comments.

‘Lousy strategy’

The terror group has been largely successful in its rapid attacks on Nigerian troops, with soldiers being lost at a high rate in many firefights. Hundreds of soldiers have been killed since July 2018, and the military lost more than 100 men in a single attack in November that year.

The apparent helplessness of the military leadership to forestall the wanton loss of personnel to insurgents serves as an indication of the precarious state of the war, said security

analyst Olumide Adesanya.

“What we have seen over the past year and now come to accept is that Boko Haram is getting stronger and the army has been responding to the situation from one lousy strategy to another,” Mr. Adesanya said. “Military casualties should not be a daily affair, if we have a good strategy against Boko Haram.”

Following the repeated takeover of military bases that resulted in heavy personnel casualties, the military announced a few weeks ago that soldiers would no longer be camped in small units. A ‘super camp’ model was initiated as a replacement.

Military chiefs said it would be difficult for Boko Haram to attack super camps, while responses to the insurgents’ activities would be more effectively coordinated from the camps.

But there have been no immediate signs that the new strategy was curtailing attacks. Within the past one month, Boko Haram has carried out about a dozen attacks, inflicting heavy casualties. On September 6, the insurgents ambushed a military convoy and seized a large amount of cash said to be ration cash allowance for soldiers.

On September 29, 18 soldiers were reportedly killed after insurgents entered Gubio Local Government Area in Borno and attacked a military unit securing the area. Following the attack, PREMIUM TIMES reported exclusively that the military declared 22 soldiers in the company, including a major, as deserters and a manhunt was launched for them. It was unclear whether any of them had been arrested.

Mr. Adesanya acknowledged that bombings by Boko Haram have reduced in recent years, but said the regular killing of soldiers was equally as damaging to the country's overall interest.

"It is also difficult to ignore Boko Haram propaganda that they deliberately stopped bombing to directly focus on incapacitating the military," the analyst said. "It used to be very difficult for ragtags like Boko Haram to kill a single soldier, but now barracks and brigades are being attacked and dozens of soldiers killed in one fell swoop."

The analyst blamed endemic corruption and incompetence of military chiefs for the devastating toll of the Boko Haram war.

"The insurgents to me are stronger now than they were when they launched their deadly campaign 10 years ago, and I blame this on corruption and incompetence among service chiefs," he said.

Nigerian soldiers have perennially complained about an acute lack of modern equipment to effectively combat insurgents, who often launch attacks with hardware believed to be more sophisticated in comparison. They blamed their situation on corruption and greed among their superiors.

In July, a major scandal broke when soldiers carted away a large but yet-to-be-determined amount of cash in a botched suspicious cash movement errand for a senior military commander.

Military chiefs have denied all allegations of corruption and continued to proclaim victory over Boko Haram, disregarding the reality on the ground.

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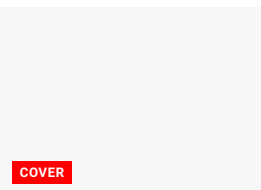
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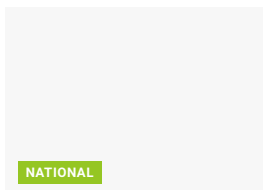
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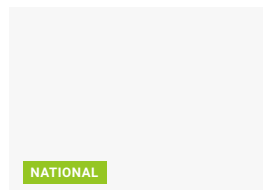
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