

Soldiers kill terrorists, suicide bombers, bandits

From **Molly Kilete**, Abuja

THE Nigerian Army said its soldiers on various internal security operations across the country have killed several terrorists, suicide bombers, bandits, cultists, and robbery suspects, among other criminals groups terrorizing the country with their activities.

The soldiers also recovered several arms and ammunitions namely; gun truck, motorcycle, anti-aircraft gun, PKT gun, rocket propelled gun tube rocket propelled gun bombs, AK 47 rifles, 25 rounds of anti-aircraft gun, 723 rounds of 7.62mm special ammunition, 51 rounds of 7.62mm NATO ammunition, 52 rounds of 7.62 X 54mm (PKT) ammunition, surgical kits, uniforms and warm clothing.

Army operations media coordinator, Colonel Aminu Iliyasu, who made this known, said 16 persons comprising 12 women and four children held captive by the insurgents were rescued and evacuated to safety.

Iliyasu also said that two suicide bombers who tried to attack an army base at Gwoza in Borno State were killed.

The statement reads: "Some criminal Boko Haram elements mounted on five gun trucks and motorcycles attempted to infiltrate 112 Task Force Battalion troops' location at Mafa in Mafa LGA of Borno State on December 1, 2019. In a shameless display of poor training and tactics, the marauding criminals made themselves easy target as they fell prey to the superior fire-

power of the resilient and highly professional troops of the said battalion.

"At the end of the encounter which lasted for about 40 minutes, the criminals once again suffered heavy casualties in both men and equipment as they were seen retreating in disarray with some of their dead and wounded. However, the dogged troops of the unit embarked on a hot pursuit of the scampering insurgents and exploited their withdrawal route.

"During the exploitation, troops recovered three Boko Haram bodies, two of them strapped with suicide vests.

"In a similar development, two female suicide bombers attempted to infiltrate the defence company of 26 Task Force Brigade Garrison location at Gwoza in Gwoza LGA of Borno State on December 1. Consequently, the eagle-eyed soldiers deployed on sentry duty identified the criminal intruders and neutralized them before they could detonate their suicide vests.

"In yet another development, based on credible intelligence, troops of 21 Special Armoured Brigade in conjunction with elements of the Civilian Joint Task Force conducted a robust clearance operation to suspected Boko Haram enclaves at Zua and Kotembe villages in Bama LGA of Borno State

in the early hours of December 2. Incidentally, the cowardly remnant Boko Haram criminals hibernating in the general area opened fire on the advancing troops from an ineffective range and fled in disarray towards Kerawa along the Nigeria - Cameroon boarder. Nevertheless, the gallant troops continued with their advance and bravely searched the area. It is gratifying to note that 12 women and four children held captive by the insurgents were rescued and evacuated to safety.

"Elsewhere, other ongoing army op-

erations and exercises conducted across the country continue to yield positive results as our gallant troops continue to decimate the criminal gangs and deny them freedom of action.

Relatedly, troops of 9 Brigade Garrison on Exercise Crocodile Smile IV, while acting on credible intelligence from some law-abiding citizens, conducted a successful cordon and search operation in the resident of one notorious drug peddler in Ipaja area of Lagos State.

Onitsha catholic priest slumps, dies playing football

From **Aloysius Attah**, Onitsha

THE catholic community in Onitsha Archdiocese was thrown into mourning yesterday following the reported death of the Director of Social Communications, Rev. Fr Pius Uchenna Ukor.

Ukor, a happy and easy going priest also in charge of the Onitsha Archdiocese and who owned a newspaper, Trinitas, reportedly slumped and died in a football pitch in Asaba Delta State Wednesday evening while coaching a football match between the catholic priests of Onitsha Archdiocese and Issele Uku diocese.

The death has also been confirmed on the verified Facebook page of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria, CBCN

The statement from the page said: "Just yesterday, Onitsha Archdiocese lost one of her priests to death. Rev Fr Pius Ukor slumped in the stadium at Asaba while the Archdiocesan priests were playing a football match with the Issele-Uku Diocesan priests. He was a bit resuscitated by the nurses and rushed to the FMC hospital in Asaba but on reaching there, he was confirmed dead.

"Until his death Fr Pius was the editor of the Archdiocesan Newspaper, Trinitas Newspaper as well as the