

How Guards Brigade lost 2 officers, 8 soldiers in terrorists' attack

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From **Molly Kilete**, Abuja

The 7 Guards Battalion Abuja was, yesterday, thrown into mourning, following the revelation that death toll from Sunday's ambush on its troops by terrorists in Bwari, a suburb of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), had risen to 10.

Daily Sun learnt that Guards Brigade, Nigerian Army, lost two officers and eight soldiers in the attack while they were on internal security operations at the Nigerian Law School, Bwari.

Rather than a direct confrontation, it was feared that the officers and soldiers might have been taken out by a sniper, who infiltrated their mini operational base in the area.

"The officers and soldiers were killed in a commando style manner as nobody in the area heard the sound of gunshots during the attack. Authorities are still finding it very difficult to believe how the killers got all their targets and escaped. We are still finding it difficult to believe what happened because this is a very big blow to us and, come to think of it, it is happening in Abuja," said a top military source.

The source suspected that to have gotten all their targets, the killing must have been carried out by a sniper. The source, however, said investigations had commenced to unravel the circumstances surrounding the attack and to get the perpetrators arrested.

“Their death has thrown the entire Nigerian army, Guards Brigade and the 7 Guards Battalion, which was their mother unit, into a mourning mood as officers, soldiers, and their bereaved families expressed shock at the incident which is coming weeks after the Kuje prison attack.

“So far, we have recovered all the bodies of the two officers and eight soldiers and are making contact with their families, some of whom are not in Abuja. The attack claimed 2×8 personnel. As you know, we cannot bury them without the consent of their family members and next of kins. So, as soon as we are through with that, we will make plans for the burial.”

Guards Brigade Public Relations Officer, Capt. Geoffrey Abakpa, confirmed the attack and said troops were combing the area to arrest the attackers.

It was gathered that most of the soldiers killed in the Bwari attack were members of 80 Regular Recruit Intake (80 RRI), while one of the officers was a Regular Combatant officer of the Nigerian Defence Academy, and the other a Direct Short Service officer. It was further gathered that the ongoing offensive carried out by the military in Niger State, has forced the terrorists to relocate to the FCT.

There has been no official reaction from the army over the attack, as the Chief Of Army Staff (COAS), Lt. Gen. Faruk Yahaya, who was on tour of operations in the North East, returned to Abuja yesterday. When contacted, Director Army Public Relations, Brig. Gen. Onyema Nwachuku, did not pick his call. He also did not respond to a text message sent to his mobile phone at the time of filing this report.

In recent months, Abuja has come under attack by terrorists, bandits, kidnappers and other criminal groups. Most residents in Kuje, Kwali, Bwari, Gwagwalada and Abaji have complained about the rise in cases of kidnapping for ransom in their areas.

The Guards Brigade is in charge of the security of the president, his immediate family, the Vice President, Very Important Personalities (VIP) and the security of Abuja and its surrounding states.

They were deployed to Bwari to foil the attack on the Law School.