

ISWAP leader, others feared killed in NAF raid

• As fighter jets bombard more terrorists's strongholds in Sambisa forest

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From **Molly Kilete**, Abuja

A Nigerian Air Force (NAF) fighter jet engaged in the ongoing counter insurgency operations in the North East have bombarded a logistics base and stronghold belonging to members of the Islamic States of West African Province (ISWAP) and killed scores of terrorists.

The bombardment, which took place at the Sambisa Forest and the Tumbuns in Borno State, left several of the terrorists injured. ISWAP Leader, Fiya Ba Yuram, who took over the leadership of the group after the death of Abubakar Shekau, is feared killed in the attack.

It was gathered that the operation took place following credible intelligence of the location in Sambisa Forest believed to be the enclave of the notorious terrorist.

A military source told Daily Sun that “the Armed Forces of Nigeria (AFN) and other security agencies have continued to synergise and pull their resources together towards ensuring that terrorists, insurgents and other criminal elements are completely eliminated for the sake of peace and security of the nation.”

The source, who hinted that the NAF aircraft have remained a critical factor in the counterterrorism and counterinsurgency strategies, said efforts were ongoing in the various theatres of operation across the country to wipe out terrorists and other criminals terrorising the peace of the country.

The source said NAF aircraft, under the Air Component of Operation Hadin Kai, carried out some strikes on terrorists enclave in Sambisa Forest and the Tumbuns in Borno State with varying degrees of successes recorded.

The source said: “Acting on credible and actionable intelligence, NAF aircraft were directed to an active location in Sambisa Forest believed to be the enclave of notorious terrorist, Fiya Ba Yuram. Fiya Ba Yuram is the current ISWAP leader of Sambisa Forest who took over the leadership following the demise of Abubakar Shekau. Please note that the title ‘Fiya’ connotes the most senior position in the terrorist’s military leadership structure. Note also that Yuram was an ally of Shekau until his demise after which he switched allegiance to ISWAP. On arrival, the location was observed to be active with terrorists seen gathering. Air strikes were then authorised and carried out on the location. An assessment of the location after the strikes revealed it to be successful, though it remained unconfirmed if Fiya Ba Yuram was among the terrorists neutralised in the strikes.

“Similar air strikes were also undertaken in the Tunbuns near Lake Chad after suspected terrorists’ activities were observed in the area believed to be a training camp. The targets were subsequently acquired and engulfed in flames all after.

The aftermath of the airstrike revealed that pandemonium broke out as the remnant of surviving terrorists took cover under nearby trees which were later struck by the aircraft.

“Even though it remained uncertain and unclear if Fiya Ba Yuram was among the terrorists neutralised in the weekend strikes, the efforts of military must be commended. The ability of the AFN and other security agencies to pick out key terrorist targets for elimination, alongside their foot soldiers is also indicative of the credibility of the intelligence provided. The need, therefore, for all Nigerians to rally round and support the AFN and other security agencies remains a key motivator towards reducing, to the barest minimum, the threats posed by the activities of terrorists and insurgents.”

Confirming the attack, NAF Director, Public Relations and Information, Air Commodore Edward Gabkwet, said: “Yes, strikes were carried out on some specific targets in the Tunbuns and Sambisa with varying degrees of successes recorded. The NAF won’t, however, be drawn into the details of those neutralised.”