

45 Boko Haram terrorists convicted, jailed for 3 to 31 years

October 14, 2017 Ndubuisi Ugah and Emmanuel Onani



- **Troops killed many Boko Haram fighters – Army**
- **Chad withdraws troops from fight against insurgents in Niger**

A Federal High Court sitting in Kainji, Niger State, has convicted and sentenced 45 Boko Haram members to between three and 31 years in jail, following the conclusion of the first phase of the trial during which 575 Boko Haram suspects were arraigned. Similarly, the Nigerian Army yesterday, said troops of Operation Lafiya Dole had, on Thursday in Borno State, killed “quite a number of suspected Boko Haram elements in separate encounters”.

The killing emerged as Chad announced that it had withdrawn hundreds of troops from neighbouring Niger, where they were helping local forces fight Boko Haram Islamist militants.

Minister of Information and Culture, Alhaji Lai Mohammed, who disclosed this yesterday, said 34 cases were struck out while 28 suspects were remanded for trial in Abuja and Minna, said in a statement. He also said the court discharged 468 suspects who had no case to answer.

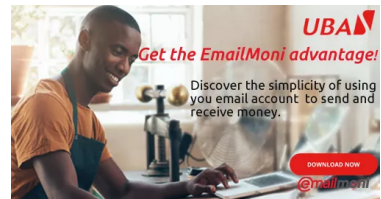
The court ordered that the 468 discharged persons should undergo deradicalization and rehabilitation programmes before they are handed over to their respective state governments.

The trial commenced with the formal remand by the court of 1,669 suspects for a period of 90 days, with the court ordering that they be arraigned within the specified period or released unconditionally.

The court adjourned the trial of other suspects to January 2018. In another development, Director, Army Public Relations (DAPR), Brig-Gen. Sani Usman, who made the disclosure in a statement, said a child was rescued during one of the operations. He, however, regretted the fact that a soldier was wounded during the encounter. Usman said: “The Troops of 202 Battalion, 21 Brigade Nigerian Army, on Operations Lafiya Dole, in furtherance of clearance and blockade Operation Deep Punch 2, on October 12, 2017,



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cleared Boko Haram terrorists' enclaves in Abaram, Churuchuru and Aulajiri villages in Bama Local Government Area of Borno State. "The terrorists on sighting our troops withdrew in disarray as the troops overpowered them with a heavy fire.

Troops neutralised three of the terrorists, rescued a child who is between five and six years of age and recovered two Dane Guns. "Similarly, troops of 151 Battalion, 21 Brigade on patrol encountered some Boko Haram terrorists along Bama-Bocobs Road.

The troops engaged the terrorists in a heavy fire fight and neutralised quite a number of them, while some of the terrorists escaped with gunshot wounds. "Regrettably, a soldier was wounded in action during the encounter. He has since been evacuated to the 7 Division Hospital and Medical Services and he is in stable condition."

Meanwhile, humanitarian sources and officials, who announced Chad's decision, yesterday said the pull-out over the past two weeks could weaken a region-wide struggle against the militants who have killed tens of thousands of people, forced many more to flee and triggered a humanitarian crisis. An online news portal, Reuters reported that there was no immediate explanation or comment from defense officials in Chad.

The move came a month after the central African country complained about an unexpected U.S. travel ban imposed on its nationals. Chad warned at the time the order could affect its security commitments, which include its involvement in the U.S.-backed fight against Boko Haram. Residents said the withdrawal had already had an impact on Niger's Diffa region, which has seen a string of attacks by Boko Haram militants crossing over from their base in neighbouring Nigeria.

Ibrahim Arimi from the border village of Bosso said banditry had increased since the Chadian troops started leaving and he had been temporarily moved to another village for safety. Diffa parliamentarian Lamido Moumouni said residents had started complaining.

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