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### **50 Boko Haram Members Killed in Borno after Shootout with Military**

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#### **Defence Headquarters**

By Michael Olugbode and Senator Iroegbu

About 50 members of the Boko Haram sect were on Thursday killed in a bloody encounter with men of the newly created 7 Division of the Nigerian Army in Gajiram and Bulabulin Ngabura communities in Nganzai and Konduga local government areas of Borno State.

Also Friday, the Chief of Army Staff, Lt-Gen. Azubuike Ihejirika made a historic and morale-boosting visit to Borno State to inspect troops' deployment to the new 7 Division of the Nigerian Army, which was recently created to maintain security in the North-eastern flank of the country threatened by Boko Haram insurgency.

Confirming the killing of the Boko Haram members, spokesman of the 7 Division, Lt. Col. Sagir Musa told journalists in Maiduguri yesterday that troops of 5 Brigade of the 7 Division of the Nigerian Army effectively repelled Boko Haram attack on Gajiram and Bulabulin Ngabura communities by killing the

insurgents.

"Troops pursued the terrorists to their camps and with air support about 50 terrorists were killed in a shoot out.

Subsequently, the villages have been rescued from the fangs of the insurgents. At the moment, the Five Brigade troops are pursuing the remnants of the fleeing gunmen by blocking all possible exit routes," Musa said.

When the military spokesman was asked about the civilian casualties, he said, "the exact number is not known by the military at the moment but local authorities perhaps may have the figure."

The outlawed Boko Haram sect had on Thursday killed Alhaji Mohammed Sani (alias A. Banje), an aide to Governor Kashim Shettima along with some other persons in the attack on Bulabulin Ngaura.

It was also gathered that a family of five persons was abducted by the insurgents in the attack on the village.

It was gathered that the gunmen came at about 10am on Thursday in military camouflage and mounted road block on the Maiduguri-Biu road, stopping vehicles including that of the aide to the governor.

It would be recalled that the second village reported to have been attacked was Gajiram, the headquarters of Nganzai Local Government Area where 15 persons were killed. A market, a school, police station, the local government secretariat and other government buildings also set ablaze on Wednesday.

A resident of the Bulabulin Ngaura, Mallam Abor said the gunmen came in military uniform and mounted road block, stopping and killing people.

Ihejirika's visit to Borno State yesterday was preceded by a combined assessment team from Defence Headquarters (DHQ), and Army Headquarters (AHQ) both in Abuja to monitor the activities of the new Division since they assumed command and control from the Joint Task Force in Borno State last month. The Director of Defence Information (DDI), Brig-Gen Chris Olukolade in a statement yesterday said that the team assessed the Division's level of progress for the next phase of the war against insurgents in the North East.

The 7 Division was recently formed to take over the security operations meant to rid the nation's territories of terrorist activities as ordered by President Goodluck Jonathan.

"After being briefed by the Division's General Officer Commanding, Maj-Gen. Obidah Ethan, the Army Chief visited some locations of the troops and equipment of the formation which had been tasked to continue the operations to flush out terrorists from the North -East," he added.

During the visit, the Army Chief commended the Youth Volunteers popularly called Civilians JTF in Borno for its support to the Nigerian Army in fighting the Boko Haram insurgency in the state.

The COAS said: "I wish to commend the youth volunteers for their support in fighting the insurgency. I also wish to commend the Shehu of Borno and the entire people of Borno State for their support and assistance."

He revealed that he was in Maiduguri to see how well the newly established 7th Division of Nigerian Army was settling down, saying, "I am impressed with the logistics and everything and I am assuring that Army Headquarters and the Defence Headquarters are appreciative of their work as it had been with the JTF."

He added: "I am very impressed with the conduct of the troops because they had adhered to their rules of engagements; these soldiers have really done us proud."

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