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Boko Haram: Heavy Fighting in Mubi as Military Reinforcement Stalls Terrorists' Advance

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Boko Haram fighters

- *Army barracks sacked*

By Senator Iroegbu in Abuja and Daji Sani in Yola

As confusion continues to reign over the status of ceasefire agreement between the federal government and the Boko Haram sect, there is a raging battle between the military and suspected members of the terrorist organisation for the control of the strategic town of Mubi, Adamawa State.

According to a military source, heavy exchange of fire was ongoing at the time of this report on Wednesday as the security forces battled to retake some of sections of the town, including the 234 Battalion Army headquarters reportedly captured earlier in the afternoon by the terrorists.

It was reported that the military guarding the barracks, after some feeble resistance, fled the scene when more militants arrived in the area with heavy firepower.

Meanwhile, all efforts to get both the Director of Defence Information (DDI), Maj-Gen. Chris Olukolade, and Director of Army Public Relations (DAPR), Brig-Gen. Olajide Laleye, to either confirm or comment on the matter proved abortive as text messages were not replied.

However, a senior military personnel who spoke with THISDAY has described the actions of the soldiers as a shameful act of cowardice deserving punishment.

The source disclosed that the military authorities had since sent a reinforcement to flush out the insurgents.

The source said: "This acts of indiscipline and cowardice is quite unfortunate and shameful when the troops are well equipped with improved welfare.

"Troops from other places are being deployed to confront the marauders."

Fortunately, the source said, the reinforcement had helped to stop the terrorists advance and would ultimately reverse the losses.

Also, several residents of Uba town in Adamawa State were on Wednesday reportedly killed by Boko Haram insurgents as many other residents fled to neighbouring towns.

A security source who confirmed the attack in Uba town said after the insurgents had an encounter with the Nigerian troops in a fierce battle, they split into groups as some of them headed to Uba and some others went towards Mubi.

About noon, there was serious battle going on between the Nigerian troops and the insurgents in Mubi, and according to the source, the insurgents were fighting hard to overrun the military barracks in Mubi.

He said the development had caused a pandemonium in the affected areas: adding "Presently there are gunshots and bombardment close to the military barracks in Mubi. Mubi has now become a ghost of its former self, people in hundreds are fleeing for their lives."

However, another source in Mubi said it was the soldiers who were shooting into the air to scare away insurgents who were believed to have sneaked into Mubi town.

A source from Uba, Ahmadu Bello, said: "We are in serious trouble, these boys (Boko Haram) have taken our towns, splitting in groups with some advancing towards Mararraban Mubi and Vintim the home town of Chief of Defense Staff, Alex Badeh, giving Nigerian troops a hot fight as soldiers retreated back to Mubi.

"As I am talking to you now, residents are scampering for their lives for fear of imminent attack and uncertainty.

"While pursuing the soldiers, the insurgents shot sporadically on innocent residents, during which five persons were instantly killed by the insurgents.

"The town is now deserted, people have all fled into nearby bushes and hilltops. We have seen soldiers in their vehicles retreating," he said.

Another source said the Boko Haram insurgents over-ran Madagali down to Bazza. "They are having field day, even yesterday I sneaked into Michika town to evacuate my aged mother, but surprisingly only insurgents could be seen moving around, no presence of soldiers," the source said.

Also, a fleeing resident from Uba, who identified himself as Mallam Yakuba said the insurgents overran the area at the early hours of yesterday in their hundreds and started shooting sporadically at the residents, resulting in the death of undisclosed numbers of people.

He said he gathered that the insurgents split themselves into smaller groups, "some of them came to Uba town, while others advanced toward Mararaban Mubi, through Vintim village to Dumo, close to the Republic of Cameroun."

Another fleeing resident from Uba, Mr. Gajere Ambrose, said several people might have been killed during the shooting spree that lasted for almost two hours in Uba.

Confirming the incident, the state governor, Bala James Ngillari, has asked the people of the state, particularly those in the affected areas to remain calm as security agents are on the top of the situation.

The governor made the disclosure through his Press Director, Mr. P P Elisha, saying that the development was unfortunate while empathising with the people affected.

He said, "His Excellency, has met with security chiefs in the state and has made frantic efforts to bring the situation under control.

"People should remain calm, security agents are on the top of situation," Elisha said.

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