

Boko Haram Takes Chibok, Gwoza; Military Moves to Attack Sambisa

● Jonathan assures on recovery of occupied territories ● Another Air Force helicopter crashes near Yola, 3 killed

Michael Olugbode in Maiduguri, **Senator Iroegbu** in Abuja and **Daji Sani** in Yola

Smarting from their defeat in Mubi, the murderous Boko Haram terrorist sect seized

Chibok and Gwoza in Borno State around 4pm on Thursday just as the military was heading to Sambisa forest to recover their fortress.

In a related development, an Air Force helicopter on the trail of the terrorists crashed

in Yola, killing all three people on board.

An eyewitness in Chibok, the home of more than 200 schoolgirls kidnapped by the terrorists in April said the soldiers stationed in the town gave the Boko Haram fighters a

good fight but withdrew when they ran out of ammunition.

According to the eyewitness: "There were about 300 soldiers who confronted the terrorists numbering about 1000. While the fighting was on, the military alerted the residents to leave

the town. The soldiers fought bravely till they ran out of ammunition after which they withdrew. By the time the terrorists rode into the town, most of the residents had fled."

The fleeing residents confirmed to the BBC that

the terrorists attacked and took control of the town on Thursday evening.

They alleged that the terrorists headed to the centre of Chibok and declared that

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Suicide

ATTACK SAMBISA

drive to recapture the lost territories and since then Mubi had been recaptured.

Findings revealed that the military authorities would be more decisive and unsparing in their approach at dealing with the Boko Haram menace and restore the country's territorial integrity.

The source lamented that the constant intervention from the political class and as well as barrage of criticisms from Amnesty International and other human rights groups affected military operations, citing how the former Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Lt-Gen. Azubuike Ihejirika was maligned for his aggressive approach, which was effective.

"The moment you are suspected and later confirmed of being a terrorist or their sponsors, you are gone. The moment you are aiding and abetting terrorism or found with weapons, you are gone within 12-24 hours because the military are being provoked.

"We no longer care about what the Amnesty international or politicians say. You cannot harbour criminals/terrorists that harm the country and expect the military to spare you", the source said early this week.

Another Air Force Helicopter Crashes Near Yola...

Meanwhile, the military yesterday recorded yet another setback in the war against terrorists with the crash of another Nigerian Air Force (NAF) helicopter on Thursday

night in the outskirts of Yola, the Adamawa State capital, making it two incidents within this week.

The initial report was that the air craft, a Mi35 Helicopter with three crew members crash-landed in Girei Local Government Area (LGA), which is about 10 kilometers from Yola, capital of Adamawa State.

However, the Military authorities while confirming the incident through the Defence Headquarters (DHQ) blog said that the ground attack helicopter crashed around Federal University of Technology, Yola, which it noted is 200km away from the theatre of operation against the Boko Haram terrorists.

The Defence authorities also confirmed that the three crew members lost their lives in the unfortunate event but that rescuers worked throughout the night until the Friday morning to preserve the wreckage and scene.

Just on Tuesday, NAF confirmed that one of its helicopters with call sign Shark 23 on a training mission, executed a controlled forced landing four minutes after take-off at the runway approach end of Yola International Airport.

The air craft, which were alleged to have some foreign military experts inside was said to have crash-landed around 9am.

The Director of Defence Information (DDI), Maj-Gen. Chris Olukolade, in a statement confirming the crash, said there was no casualty recorded as all the crew members had been recovered back to the base.

Jonathan Assures on Recovery of Occupied Territories...

While the push to recover Sambisa is in progress, President Goodluck Jonathan yesterday restated the determination of the federal government to liberate all territories presently occupied by the terrorists.

The president's commitment came through the Minister of State for Power, Alhaji Mohammed Wakil few hours after Mubi, Adamawa State was liberated from the terrorists by the military and a group of local hunters.

Jonathan, who gave the assurance at the inauguration of the Presidential Initiative for the North East (PINE), said the federal government was going to deploy all necessary resources to liberate all territories occupied by Boko Haram.

He declared that the armed forces were mobilising human and material resources to reclaim lost territories and implement a Marshall plan for the rehabilitation, reconstruction and redevelopment of the insurgency-ravaged North East region.

Affirming that his administration was determined to tackle and defeat terrorism at all cost, the President said the federal agenda for the North-east extended beyond ongoing military actions to measures designed to provide short, medium and long term solutions to the overall challenges facing the region.

He listed non-military interventions to include the

Presidential Initiatives for the North-east headed by the National Security Adviser; the Presidential Committee on the Distribution of Relief Materials headed by the NEMA Director-General, Mallam Sani Sidi; Victims Support Fund chaired by former Defence Minister, Lt General T. Y. Danjuma and Safe School Initiative being coordinated by the Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Dr Okonjo Iweala.

Jonathan said the interventions were not political gimmicks but genuine holistic response to the root of challenges facing the region.

The representative of Governor Kashim Shettima at the occasion, Senator Mohammed Ali Ndume who claimed that he was one of the IDPs as his hometown, Gwoza, had been annexed by the sect, said apart from the National Emergency Management Agency which had impacted on the lives of the displaced persons, other federal agencies established for such purpose were nowhere in sight.

He said that PINE was a lofty idea but would only receive commendation of the North-east when the problem of insecurity was solved and the people relocated to their homelands and equally rehabilitated to live a worthwhile life.

The chairman of PINE, Prof. Soji Adelaja said that the federal government had in place both short and long term programmes of intervention to change the fortunes of the region and assist it to match toward prosperity.