

# Military Kills 40 ISWAP Fighters in Damaturu

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Kingsley Nwezeh in Abuja

The Nigerian Army yesterday said that combined air strikes and artillery bombardment have killed 40 fighters and top commander of terrorist group, Islamic State for West African Province (ISWAP), during a fire-fight in Damaturu, Yobe State capital; Biu and Gwoza in Borno State.

This came as troops also ramped up attacks against insurgents in Biu and Gwoza Local Government Councils of Borno State.

Chief of Army Staff, Tukur Buratai, urged the troops to remain resolute in order to win the war against insurgency.

Giving details of the battle of Damaturu, the Nigerian Army Operations Media Coordinator, Col Aminu Iliyasu, said the combined troops of Sector 2 and Air Task Force of Operation Lafiya Dole dislodged the insurgents' advance with combined artillery bombardment and sustained airstrikes.

He said a top ISWAP Commander, Abu Mukhtar, who coordinated several attacks on the fringes of Lake Chad, was among the over 30 terrorists decimated during the fierce encounter.

According to him, "During the encounter, the resilient troops promptly mobilised and blocked the insurgents' advance on Gashua Road in the outskirts of Damaturu, Yobe State.

"The troops, thereafter, engaged the criminals in a fierce fire-fight with the support of Air Task Force Operation Lafiya Dole which unleashed devastating firepower from the air to help take out some of the criminals' gun trucks."

IIyasu stated that “the superior firepower of the troops forced the insurgents to withdraw in disarray albeit with very heavy casualty in both men and equipment. It is confirmed that a top ISWAP Commander, Abu Muqhtar, believed to have coordinated several attacks along the fringes of Lake Chad, was neutralised along with over 30 other insurgents in that attack.”

The army war update said: “Regrettably, two gallant soldiers were wounded in action during the encounter. The wounded soldiers are currently receiving treatment and responding positively at a military medical facility.

“In the aftermath of the encounter, troops captured one gun truck and destroyed two others. Troops equally captured 561 rounds of 12.7mm ammunition and 1,420 rounds of 7.62mm special ammunition.”

It said troops also recovered “1,850 rounds of 7.62mmx51 ammunition and two rocket-propelled gun bombs. Other items captured by the gallant troops included one handheld communication radio, 27 sachets of meal, ready-to-eat wraps and 350 litres of petrol.”

On the planned attack in Mandara-Girau axis of Biu town in Biu Local Government Area of Borno State, Col Ilyasu said the terrorists mounted on 17 gun trucks and motorcycles met stiff resistance.

“In a swift and commendably bold response, the troops of 231 battalion moved and engaged the advancing criminals while troops of 331 Artillery Regiment brought to bear artillery bombardment on the insurgents, forcing them to withdraw in disarray amid heavy casualty. “In yet another development, in the early hours of December 23, 2019, troops of 121 Task Force Battalion deployed in Pulka in Gwoza LGA of Borno State also thwarted another Boko Haram attack on their location with devastating consequences,” he said.

The Chief of Army Staff, Buratai, while commending the troops, urged them to remain resolute in order to finish the war.