

17 Soldiers Feared Killed in Boko Haram's Attack on Borno

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- *Never again will insurgents hold territories, says General*

Michael Olugbode in Maiduguri

No fewer than 17 soldiers were killed in confrontations between the military and Boko Haram insurgents along Bama-Gwoza road in Borno State on Friday night.

Many soldiers were also said to have been abducted by the insurgents in the confrontations, even as the large number of casualties on the Boko Haram's side, could not be ascertained as at the time of filing this report.

The insurgents were said to have attacked Firgi, 20 kilometres north of Pulka along the road from Gwoza to Bama.

They were also said to have killed 13 soldiers in the crossfire that lasted for over two hours.

The insurgents, whose number of casualties could not be ascertained, were said to have forced the military to retreat.

They were equally said to have carted away some arms, ammunition and vehicles belonging to the Nigerian Army.

An impeccable source told THISDAY that during the crossfire around 10 p.m on January 17, 2020 on Firgi, "13 government forces members were killed with four of their vehicles taken away. The insurgents were back on the same axis the second day, Saturday to continue from where they stopped."

The terrorists were said to have attacked a military company at Banki junction on Bama-Gwoza road at 10 p.m.

THISDAY gathered that the battle lasted for about three hours (10p.m. to 1a.m.), with both sides pushing for victory.

The casualties on the side of the military were four, while the number of casualties on the side of the insurgents was not known.

The insurgents also abducted a yet-to-be ascertained number of soldiers and carted away prized arms and ammunition.

Confirmation from the military was not successful as at the time of filing this report as text messages to the Army spokesman, Col. Sagir Musa, and the spokesman of the military joint task force on counter insurgency in the North-east – Operation Lafiya Dole, Col. Isa Ado, were not responded to.

Meanwhile, the Commander of Operation Lafiya Dole, Maj. Gen. Olusegun Adeniyi, has said Boko Haram had failed in the ongoing war against the country.

He equally promised that the military would not allow them an inch of land in Nigeria.

Speaking at a party organised for the troops in Maiduguri on Saturday evening, Adeniyi, who led a victory dance, said: "Boko Haram has failed; we are not going to let them get an inch of land in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states."

Adeniyi, who called out officers and soldiers and guests at the get together to be part of the victory dance, said: "We are happy to dance and shame Boko Haram who does not want us to be happy."

The Army chief, who was joined in the dance by the Borno Deputy Governor, Alhaji Usman Kadafur, the guest of honour at the occasion, said: "I have made a covenant to go after Boko Haram, fight Boko Haram and end their menace."

Responding, Kadafur said: "We appreciate all the efforts by the military to safeguard our territory. We pray to God for guidance and repose of the soul of heroes, those that have

paid the supreme price and we ask that God continue to be with their widows and orphans.”

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