

Troops Kill 100 Insurgents, Lose 29 Soldiers, Officers

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By Kingsley Nwezeh

The Military High Command said yesterday that combined air strikes and artillery bombardment by troops and Air Task Force of Operation Lafiya Dole decimated 100 insurgents during the confrontation between troops and terrorists last Monday in Gorgi, Borno State.

It said 29 soldiers and some officers were killed while 39 others were wounded during the fire-fight.

This comes as military authorities activated its national disaster response units in collaboration with the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and recalled retired medical personnel to join the ones in active service.

It said the units would be in charge of security management of emergencies other than medicals.

Giving an update on the Nigerian troops killed and wounded during the clearance operation in Gorgi, Coordinator, Directorate of Defence Media Operations, Major General John Enenche, who earlier said 47 soldiers were killed, reviewed the number downwards based on new figures from the battlefield.

He said some officers were killed but could not make their names available since the procedure for informing their families were not concluded.

On the burial plans for the fallen officers, he said the next of kin of the deceased soldiers would be contacted while a befitting burial would be accorded the fallen soldiers and officers in line with military burial procedure.

"Following the encounter between Armed Forces of Nigeria and insurgents in Operation Lafiya Dole at Gorgi between 21 and 23 March 2020, a team was sent to carry out the due operational after action procedure which include reconfirmation of casualties and immediate medical evacuation required among others," he said.

Enenche said "after the exercise, the team made the following findings: 29 Nigerian troops were killed in action and 39 were wounded in action, as a result of the explosion of the truck carrying logistics and ammunition resupply for the fighting echelon.

"This is contrary to the figures from the first contact situation report of 47 killed in action and 15 wounded in action. This is a common occurrence during combat operations due to the fog of war, encounters or conflicts, when first contact reports are released to higher quarters in contemporary times, in order to counter false reports and fake news by mischief makers."

He affirmed that "the team also found a casualty of over 100 Boko Haram terrorists neutralised as the result of direct fire action and encounter with the gallant troops of the land component of the Armed Forces of Nigeria during the clearance of Gorgi.

"This figure is against the scores given during the briefing, 500 and 200 respectively provided by secondary sources."

Major General Enenche noted that the land component of the Armed Forces of Nigeria in Operation Lafiya Dole successfully cleared Gorgi and dealt a heavy blow on the enemy and the end state of clearing Gorgi was achieved.

"The Armed Forces of Nigeria hereby assures the general public that it will remain committed to tackling the security challenges in the country to ensure that the Country is peaceful," he said.

Meanwhile, the military has activated national response units across the country in collaboration with NEMA even as it recalled retired medical personnel to be part of the preparation for the military response to the situation.

Enenche further stated that 17 medical facilities under medical aid across the country were designated for isolation and treatment of COVID-19.

He said a committee was constituted at the Defence Headquarters to ensure that the Armed Forces of Nigeria provides the necessary support to the Federal Government of Nigeria at this period.

"It is mainly a non-kinetic military operation with major features of Civil Military Cooperation (CIMIC) activities. Equally, it is in line with the Chief of Defence Staff's lines of conducting contemporary military operations in Nigeria.

"In this regard, the Armed Forces of Nigeria has developed a two-pronged approach to fight the pandemic, namely, the medical and security approaches," he said.

He said the medical approach entailed the deployment of military personnel in aid of all Ministries Departments and Agencies of the Federal Government through the provision of land, maritime and air assets, for transportation of emergency cases and medical supplies, as was the case with the medical supplies donated by the Jack Ma Foundation.

On Security related support, he said the AFN would activate its disaster response units across the country in conjunction with National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA).

He said the units would be responsible for security management of emergencies other than medicals.

"Furthermore, under the medical aid, we have 17 medical facilities spread across the country, which have been designated for isolation and treatment of confirmed cases of the COVID-19. We have also concluded plans to recall our retired medical personnel to complement those in active service.

"The Defence Headquarters hereby assures the general public of its total commitment to the human security effort of the Federal Government of Nigeria", Enenche added.