

MNJTF Launches Aerial, Artillery Bombardment on Boko Haram in Borno

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●NAF helicopters provide air support

Kingsley Nwezeh in Abuja

In continuation of a grand offensive launched Thursday against the Boko Haram terrorist group, also known as Islamic State's West Africa Province (ISWAP), the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) yesterday hurled heavy artillery fire and aerial bombardments on the insurgents at Tumbun Fulani, on the fringes of Lake Chad, killing scores of insurgents.

The joint offensive followed the killing of 122 soldiers from Chad and Nigeria in the last two weeks by Boko Haram.

The Air Task Force of the MNJTF provided airlift support to troops of participating MNJTF national contingents along with logistics.

A war update issued by the Directorate of Defence Media Operations (DDMO) said the offensive was predicated on intelligence reports that indicated the presence of a camp of ISWAP within Tumbun Fulani settlement in Northern Borno.

The DDMO stated, "The Armed Forces of Nigeria, through the Air Task Force of Operation Lafiya Dole and Artillery Batteries of Sector 3 of the Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF), has destroyed an Islamic State of West Africa Province (ISWAP) camp at Tumbun Fulani on the fringes of Lake Chad in Northern Borno State.

"This was achieved in combined air and artillery bombardments conducted on 3 April 2020 as part of the coordinated joint offensive by the MNJTF to dislodge and completely rid the Islands (Tumbuns) of Lake Chad of terrorists' presence and activities."

The update issued by the Acting Director, Defence Media Operations, Defence Headquarters, Brigadier-General Bernard Onyeuko, said the operation was executed on the heels of credible intelligence reports indicating that the ISWAP elements, with their structures concealed under the dense vegetation of the area, used the settlement as a base for planning and launching attacks.

"Accordingly, the joint interdiction mission was launched with a Nigerian Air Force (NAF) Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) aircraft coordinating the barrage of artillery and air fire towards designated targets in the settlement, destroying them and neutralising some of the ISWAP fighters in the process," the update said.

It added, "In a related development, the Air Task Force has continued to provide airlift support to troops of participating MNJTF national contingents, along with their logistics."

The update also said, "NAF ISR platforms and helicopters are also providing aerial command posts for enhanced coordination of close air support missions as well as fire control support for independent ground artillery bombardment of terrorists' positions."

Onyeuko maintained, "The Armed Forces of Nigeria, in furtherance of the objective of restoring peace and security in the North-east, will sustain the offensive against the enemies of our nation."