

# Military Investigates Alleged Bombing of Civilians

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Major General John Enenche

Kingsley Nwezeh in Abuja

The Nigerian Military High Command said yesterday it has launched an investigation into an alleged bombing of a village by the Air Task Force of Operation Lafiya Dole in Borno State.

It said the bombing of Shokotoko village in Damboa Local Government Area of Borno State inadvertently killed civilians. The military, however, said the air strike was based on credible intelligence reports provided by intelligence and security agencies, which indicated that the target was a legitimate one occupied by terrorists.

The update signed by the Coordinator of the Directorate of Defence Media Operations, Major General John Enenche, said the Nigeria Air Force by training do not attack any location occupied by non-combatants.

"The attention of the Armed Forces of Nigeria (AFN) has been drawn to some media reports indicating that air strikes by the Air Task Force of Operation Lafiya Dole at Shokotoko Village in Damboa Local Government Area of Borno State on April 9, 2020, inadvertently led to the deaths of some civilians.

target location was occupied solely by Boko Haram Terrorists,” it said.

The update noted that “as customary, the attack helicopter that executed the mission was accompanied Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) aircraft to ensure proper targeting for avoidance of collateral damage”.

The statement further maintained that “Nigerian Air Force (NAF) pilots, by training and in line with extant F (ROEs) for the operation, do not attack any location if it is observed that non-combatants, especially wom present.

“In such cases, the pilots would rather return to base with their munitions unexpended. Consequently, on foregoing, the location was considered a legitimate target”.

Enenche said “an investigation is being carried out and subsequent actions will be taken in line with extant practices, while remaining accountable to the Nigerian people”.

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