

## Nigeria: Terrorism - Heavy Fighting As Troops Engage Boko Haram in Gwoza

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By Kingsley Omonobi

ABUJA. – Heavy fighting between troops of the Nigerian Military and heavily armed terrorists of the Boko Haram sect fighting to retain control of Gwoza town in Borno State, was on-going last night with Airforce attack helicopters providing air cover as the insurgents remained recalcitrant in the battle.

In fact, a top military source, who spoke to Vanguard last night, said the insurgents' fire-power in being able to withstand the fire-power

of the military forces was a source of concern to the military command in the epicentre of the war on terror.

There were reports of casualties from both the military and the terrorists while the sheer number of the insurgents and the fact that they were heavily armed prompted the ground troops to request for reinforcements from the air force to provide air bombardments.

Units of the 213 battalion Task Force and 234 Special Operations battalion both based in Mubi which attempted to retake Gwoza Township from Islamist militant Boko Haram were said to have retreated and sent signals for air support as a result of unrelenting gun fire from the insurgents.

While a source said using the word defeat of Nigerian soldiers fighting to retake Gwoza town from the grip of Boko Haram insurgents was childish, he noted that the commanders on ground were only making strategies for more effective offensive.

Reports from the battle-field had indicated that following three days of fighting over 100 civilians and several soldiers were killed

Vanguard gathered that some officers (names withheld) who led the attempt to recapture Gwoza and other towns from the terrorists were feared either dead or captured by the insurgents and their whereabouts was a source of concern to the military authorities.

Vanguard was told that due to the worrisome terrain of the battle area, the terrorists were able to ambush some of the soldiers and demobilise some of their equipment.

There were conflicting figures on the casualty figures on the part of soldiers killed, but it was not possible to get confirmation.

Recall that the Nigerian military at the weekend recaptured Damboa town after Boko Haram overran the town and planted its flag.

As at the time of sending this report, Vanguard was expecting the Director of Defence Information, Maj General Chris Olukolade to reply a text questionnaire on the situation of the fighting in Gwoza.

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