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## Revealed: Tactical blunders, self interests exposed troops to latest B/Haram attacks

ON JANUARY 5, 2019 4:25 AM / IN [HEADLINES](#), [NEWS](#), [TRENDING](#) / [64 COMMENTS](#)**...REVELATION FROM SERVING SOLDIERS:**

- \*Disbanded Metele unit moved to Malfatori rather than Kukawa Cross
- \*Arage Battalion moved to MNJTF instead of Kekenno
- \*Over 54 soldiers deserted in the last two weeks
- \*Unit Commander dismisses soldiers
- \*37 soldiers still missing after Jeli attack



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### By Our Reporters

The current upsurge in Boko Haram attacks on Nigerian Army units in Borno and Yobe states are not only as a result of inadequate weapons as being claimed but also a product of field commanders' tactical mistakes and self-interests, Saturday Vanguard learned.



army

Call for state of emergency not political, I am serious about it – Yari

Investigation revealed that the situation was mainly responsible for the attack on Metele, Rann, Buni Gari, Baga, Kukawa Cross, Gudumbali, Bunduran, Kekeno ,

Kimba, Sabon Gari, Wajirko, Damasak, Kukareta, and Jeli, since the beginning of November till date.

While the attacks in Borno communities mainly happened in the northern part of the state, other sections were learned to have recorded minimal onslaughts within the same period, with little or no casualties.

It was learned that the attacks by the insurgents with its attendant death toll could have been avoided had the commanders' accepted inputs from the troops on the ground.

What was described as the failure to work with intelligence information provided troops, left most of the places mentioned, open to the wave of attacks by the insurgents, especially in Borno.

### **Information from troops**

Just like the attack on Nigerian Army 157 Task Force Battalion in Metele last November, which Saturday Vanguard gathered was largely made possible by the poor location of the base, the subsequent attacks on Rann, Buni Gari, Baga, Kukawa Cross, Gudumbali, Monguno, Bunduran, Kekeno, and Kimba, resulted from the relocation of units to vulnerable areas and failure to fortify them.

Explaining this, a military source, said the disbandment of the Metele Unit after the last attack and the movement of the remaining soldiers to Malfatori instead of Cross Kukawa, made it easy for the insurgents to attack soldiers of 157 Strike Force Battalion at Cross Kukuwa on November 27.

In addition, one of the the sources, who had spent three years fighting the insurgents, said the movement of Arage Battalion to MNJTF instead of Kekeno left the place unfortified and eventually paved the way for another attack by the insurgents.



He said the implication of these actions, left most areas, especially communities in the northern part of Borno, bare for attacks by the terrorists.

### **Business dealings with insurgents and natives**

As a result of the recurrence of the attacks, the source noted that no fewer than 54 soldiers had abandoned the battlefields in the last two weeks.

However, he revealed that the authorities have not made efforts to reach out to those who deserted.

In addition, he said the activities of a Major, who is currently the Unit Commander of a battalion, should be questioned in the search for reasons behind the wave of attacks.

Another source said the senior officer was known to have business dealings with insurgents and natives, adding that Boko Haram insurgents usually attack any command the officer headed immediately he is redeployed.

Backing the claim with examples, he cited the Metele, **Kekeno** and other attacks, adding that contrary to the laws of the army, the officer had dismissed soldiers, who questioned his activities.

### **Monguno and Cross axis**

He said: "On December 25, 2018, Monguno was attacked. Before then, I had warned that the mistakes they were making could lead to attacks. I also warned that the 157 Strike Force that was dislodged severally at Metele which was later disbanded, and Arege that was moved to MNJTF, Malafatori ought to return to Monguno and Cross axis but they refused. "Jeli was also attacked recently and the corpses of some soldiers have not been recovered till date. Remnants of those dislodged at Jeli are now in Monguno and they are being used for patrol



activities. It is good for the media to confirm from the Army Spokesperson but he is not on the ground and only works with information that the commanders give. Why would people like us who are on the ground provide information about the battlefield and the information would be dismissed?

“The will to tackle the insurgency is not there. We lost two soldiers in Monguno on December 25. The soldiers belonged to sector 4. Monguno is Sector 3. The Base Camp that is giving security to the sector headquarters is divided into four. The camp is divided for easy administration. Boko Haram will continue to attack so long as there is no will to tackle the problem.”

### Over 54 soldiers

“There are so many people, who connive with them and in the process, sabotage the efforts of the army. They need to be investigated. The army leadership is aware of these attacks. Unfortunately, the problems persists. We wonder if some people are benefiting from this crisis. Over 54 soldiers have abandoned their weapons and left the army in the last two weeks. The most painful aspect is that the unit heads do not even try to reach out to the soldiers to know if they were killed in action, or deserted. This shows the kind of leadership we have. There are reasons for a few people to be investigated if we must really tackle Boko Haram insurgency in the northeast. There is a senior officer, who is a Major. He was the Commander of 157 Task Force Battalion in **Metele**. He is someone with questionable records. Wherever he commands, the moment he lives the place, Boko Haram insurgents will attack the place. This Major was the Commander in Meteale before the late Lt Col I.I Sakaba took over.

### Fish and cow businesses

“After he left Meteale as a Commander, **Boko Haram** attacked the place, leading to the death of many soldiers. He left there and came as acting Commander of a battalion under Sector 3. He had been engaged severally in fish businesses and

running everywhere with Boko Haram. Recently, a few people from 170 Battalion were deployed to Kekenno, the moment he discovered that someone from his community, a Sergeant, was among, he abandoned his primary duty by getting involved in buying and selling cows with the assistance of the Sergeant from his town. While he was busy transacting businesses, the same insurgents kept attacking those locations he was meant to protect. There was a time a Corporal from the Southsouth confronted him about his activities and he dismissed the soldier. Does he have the right to do so?

### What our leadership should do

“Feeding is not what we expect too. It is poor as far as we are concerned. Did he have the right to dismiss a soldier who confronted him? The soldier only told him to stop his activities and do the right thing? Why not constitute a board of inquiry to look into the matter? Even when the soldier insisted that he should be taken to a court-martial the Major refused.

“This Major needs to be questioned about the recent attacks in Kekenno, and Kukawa axis. He should be asked why Boko Haram always attack the places he commanded the moment he leaves.

“We have 120 **soldiers** deployed to Damasak. They belong to 170 Battalion and have been there for nearly one year without being redeployed. Why did he want the soldiers who are only spending a few months in Kekenno (eight kilometres to Monguno) to be changed? Why are soldiers under his command absconding? The army leadership needs to investigate him.

“Why did he not allow the soldier, who he dismissed to have gone for court-martial? When they were having businesses with the Boko Haram people and the local residents, he did not call for the soldiers to be changed, but now that a few soldiers had been posted to Kekenno, he wants them redeployed. The army leadership should question his motive. Why does he want those, who have

stayed for just five months to be changed while those who have spent nearly one year are still there? All these took place on December 21 and 22, 2018. Due to the activities of this Major, the soldiers refused to be redeployed, insisting that it is the appropriate superior authority that can redeploy them. Some of them who refused are absconding because they don't want to be redeployed to where they will be killed by Boko Haram."

### Some people are waging psychological warfare—NA

Notwithstanding, the Army in a statement last Thursday, debunked reports that Boko Haram fighters are better equipped than Nigerian soldiers.

**Army** Spokesman, Brigadier-General Sani Usman, in a statement that addressed various concerns about the ongoing counter-insurgency war, said some misguided elements were waging psychological warfare against the troops.

He said: "Unfortunately, the psychological attacks are not being waged against the Nigerian Army by the **Boko Haram** terrorists alone, but also by some misguided elements both within and out of the country. In spite of extant rules, these groups of persons discuss highly classified military issues which they are mostly ignorant about on various media platforms.

"Indeed, those who should know better are the ones perpetrating these acts. The psychological effects of spreading misinformation and fake news are grievous and inimical to national security and should not be allowed to continue."

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