



MINISTÈRE DE LA COMMUNICATION
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATION

SPECIAL OPERATION OF THE CAMEROONIAN DEFENCE AND SECURITY FORCES AGAINST BOKO HARAM IN THE NGOSHE AREA

PRESS CONFERENCE

**INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT BY
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MINISTER OF COMMUNICATION**

Yaoundé, February 15, 2016

Distinguished Journalists,

I wish you a warm welcome to this press conference on the special operations that our Defence and Security Forces have just led against the units of the Boko Haram terrorist group in the Ngoshe area located in Nigeria, about fifteen kilometers away from Ashigashia in the Far North region of Cameroon, in collaboration with the Army Staff of the Nigerian Armed Forces.

These operations, which were carried out between February 11 in the morning and February 14, 2016 in the evening, fell within the scope of the operation called "ARROW Five" under the banner of the Multinational Joint Task Force involving the five front line countries.

You certainly remember that while they were literally defeated in the field of military operations *stricto sensu* led without respite by the Cameroonian Army, the criminal Boko Haram hordes opted, during the second half of 2015, to embark on tactical suicide attacks on innocent civilians.

Right from early 2015, it was noted that these terrorists, taking advantage of sporadic incursions in Cameroon, undertook to bury improvised explosive devices along the major routes where our defence and security forces are operating, in a bid to undermine their mobility during combat operations.

Our Defence and Security Forces therefore undertook to devise new strategies to counter these newfound methods, by tracing and collecting accurate information, as well as sorting out all indicators that could map out the circuit for the manufacturing of explosives used by the enemy and to anticipate their implementation processes.

It was based on these investigations that the town of Ngoshe in Nigeria was formally identified as one of the Boko Haram command posts hosting factories for the manufacturing of bombs and mines. This command post was also used to brainwash and format teenagers used as human bombs during suicide attacks.

Once intelligence was gathered, Cameroonian Special Forces, having obtained the approval of the Nigerian Command, launched the attack against Boko Haram positions with significant support from the Nigerian ally in terms of intelligence and operational coordination.

During this victorious assault which involved a very high level of expertise from our Special Forces, 162 Boko Haram terrorists were neutralized, 4 artisanal mine factories were dismantled, and from these factories, 5 mines ready to be used, hundreds of explosive holders, batteries, detonating cords, suicide bomber vests and various sharp objects used to trigger explosives were seized.

Still during this offensive, a previously identified training centre was set ablaze, two pickup vehicles set on fire, war weapons seized, including two 12.7-milimeter heavy machine guns, three 7.62-milimeter machine guns, one RPG7-type rocket launchers, twelve AK47 assault rifles, two rifles, several grenades, one gas gun, tens of trafficking weapons and a hundred of factice training rifles, rudimentary weapons military uniforms, as well as several tens of charger cases and thousands of ammunitions of various calibers, as well generators, motor-pumps and a hundred of motorcycles.

The operation led by Cameroonian Special Forces also led to the release of a hundred of people made prisoners by Boko Haram.

Fifteen Cameroonian hostages, including seven members of the same family, namely the GARBA BELLO family, among whom the family head, the spouse and five children, were freed by our forces during this operation, and brought back to Cameroon.

Several Nigerian hostages were also freed thanks to this intervention of Cameroonian Special Forces.

Unfortunately, this special, operation, despite its resounding success, claimed the life of two of our valiant soldiers, who fell at the battle field while fighting for the sake of the Nation. They are Captain PIPWOH YARI Emmanuel and Lieutenant Colonel KWENE EKWELE Beltus Honoré.

The death of Captain PIPWOH YARI Emmanuel occurred on February 11, 2016 when around 9 a.m., a violent skirmish opposed our Special Forces to Boko Haram terrorists who were positioned on the road leading to Ngoshe, the target of the Cameroonian offensive.

Situated at about five kilometers from this objective, the leading company of the Cameroonian forces headed by the young captain, stepped up a strong and heroic fight against the Boko Haram terrorists, leading to the destruction of two heavily armed vehicles, forty motorcycles belonging to the enemies and neutralization of over a dozen of these criminals.

It was during this epic battle that Captain YARI received a bullet from the enemy and sustained a serious injury which eventually led to his death.

With respect to Lt. Col. KWENE EKWELE Beltus Honoré, it should be noted that his death occurred when the military operations were already over in the Ngoshe area that had completely been conquered by our Special Forces.

Assigned to convey the Nigerian hostages that had been released at Ngoshe and to hand them over to the Nigerian authorities in the neighbouring town of Pulka, Lieutenant Colonel KWENE EKWELE Beltus Honoré sustained a serious injury alongside four other soldiers, when their vehicle stepped into a landmine that had been previously laid by Boko Haram.

The injured were immediately evacuated by helicopter to Maroua and then transferred by a special aircraft of the air force to Douala.

It was in the course of this immediate evacuation that Lieutenant Colonel KWENE unfortunately gave up the ghost.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to now dwell on the two officers of our Defence Forces who have just lost their lives on the battle field, to pay homage to their respective memories and to express, on behalf of His Excellency the President of the Republic, Commander-in-Chief of the Army, the compassion of the entire nation and the comfort of the State to their deeply affected families.

Lieutenant Colonel KWENE Ekwele Beltus Honoré was 39 years old at the time of his death. He had just been promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, and

received his epaulettes, on January 1, 2016, during a ceremony chaired by the Minister Delegate at the Presidency in charge of Defence, in the town of Matari Kidji, in the Far North region.

Lieutenant Colonel KWENE Ekwele Beltus was a renowned officer with outstanding strength of character. He was known not only for his bravery and courage, but also for its pragmatic sense and taste for dialogue, education and communication.

Holder of Diploma of the Diplôme d'État-major, Lieutenant-Colonel KWENE was a very experienced artillery officer. This experience has been demonstrated in the many field operations where he had always showcased a great sense of tactical coherence, as testified by his involvement in the southern zone of Operation Alpha where he participated in several epic battles and successfully repelled Boko Haram's criminal attacks.

Young Captain PIPWOH YARI Emmanuel, a graduate of the "Army and Nations" batch of the Yaounde Combined Military Academy (EMIA), also died at a very tender age, when he was just 31.

Crafted in the mold of a harsh and selective training in counter-terrorism, Captain YARI had already showcased, just 7 years after graduating from EMIA, obvious and exceptional deeds of arms recorded within the framework of the fight against poaching - especially in the Bouba-Ndjioda Park - and Operation Alphas, where within which he served and participated in several emblematic battles against the Boko Haram terrorist group.

The features that are common to both Lieutenant Colonel KWENE and Captain YARI, have been commitment, selflessness, honor and loyalty throughout their career under the national flag.

Their sacrifice will remain an example for us to emulate just like the one embodied in the tireless efforts of all our Defence and Security Forces, glorious defenders of our territorial integrity and civilizational values of our nation.

Beyond the brilliance surrounding this yet another decisive victory at Ngoshe, what is worth retaining here is the firm determination of His Excellency Paul BIYA, President of the Republic, Commander-in-Chief of the Army to lead a fearless and relentless war against Boko Haram, until its final eradication from the national territory.

Another key point is the message that our Defence Forces echoed to the entire Cameroonian youth at a time when they were celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the Youths Day. For it was on that very day of the golden jubilee that our Special Forces undertook to once again translate into concrete action their commitment to loyalty to the Fatherland by going to hunt down the enemy at the very heart of its center of gravity. To the memory of these brave soldiers, each of us should have at heart to keep the image of their blood that was shed for our country as an ultimate sacrifice for the preservation of our entire nation.

On behalf of the entire nation, the **President of the Republic, His Excellency Paul BIYA, Commander-in-Chief of the Army**, hereby addresses to the families of the illustrious fallen soldiers. He reiterates the same condolences to the families of all other soldiers of our valiant Defense and Security Forces who

fell on the field of honor to defend the Republic in the relentless fight against the forces of crime, evil and barbarity.

The **President of the Republic, His Excellency Paul Biya, Head of State, Commander-in-Chief of the Army**, standing tall and more than ever leading his people, hereby expresses his entire satisfaction to the Cameroonian Defence and Security Forces who are honouring our embleme and symbols as well as to all those who refuse to give in to obscurantism, tyranny, absolutism of thought that are embodied by Boko Haram.

The **Head of State** hereby assures all Cameroonians and our Defence and Security Forces that he will leave no stone unturned to provide our Army and Security Units with all necessary means for the victorious conduct of their mission as well as the safeguarding of our territorial integrity, the triumph of unity and lasting peace in our country.

In the same vein, the **Head of State** renews to all countries of the front line who are directly involved in the fight against Boko Haram and to all friendly countries of the international community supporting us in the fight against the hackneyed ideology and civilizational backwardness of theses criminal hordes, the strong commitment of Cameroon to continue leading this relentless battle until the final victory.

To our Defence and Security Forces, allow me to say, on behalf of the Government, that Cameroonians are proud of them, proud of their bravery, their loyalty, their patriotism, their selflessness, their sense of sacrifice and their

professionalism, thanks to which our country is today on the verge of annihilating the macabre and destructive Boko Haram criminal horde.

Naturally, I cannot end my statement, **Distinguished Journalists**, without expressing the gratitude of the Government and that of the whole Nation, to you journalists, for the excellent work you are relentlessly doing, in supporting the commitment of our country against the unwanted aggression imposed on us by terrorism as embodied by Boko Haram.

I therefore urge you to continue on this path and remain vigilant because such an attitude is a high honor to you and to our country as it sufficiently demonstrates show civilizational and humanistic causes can transcend all differences and uphold the values that are commonly shared by all peoples of the world.

Thank you for your kind attention.