

Breaking News: BOKO HARAM Announces ceasefire! ...The arrest and prosecution of ex-Gov Ali Modu Sheriff is part of their condition

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In a surprise development that may end the persistent uprising that has resulted in the killing of innocent people and destruction of property worth billions of naira in the last three years in north eastern part of Nigeria, the radical Islamic sect Boko Haram whose operations have crippled the economy of Borno and neighbouring Yobe states have announced a surprise cease fire today in Maiduguri the Borno State capital.

DESERT HERALD had hours earlier broken the news that the sect will today formally announce a cease fire with some conditions. Conservatively, the violence in the northern part of Nigeria had killed more than two thousand people while many more are left permanently incapacitated either due to the terror attacks (suicide bombing) by the sect or due to torture and sometimes even gun shots by the members of the Joint Task Force (JTF).

Dependable sources told DESERT HERALD that the leadership of the sect in recent weeks were under intense pressure from the Borno Elders Forum to consider the sacrifice of a cease fire not because of the lackluster attitude of the federal government but because of the increasing casualties being recorded on a daily basis. Earlier, DESERT HERALD had received an exclusive email from the sect members confirming their resolve for a cease fire and according to them to give those in authority the chance to show to the world that they are indeed committed to peaceful resolution of the crisis.

In a press conference that was attended by some members of the Borno Elders Forum in Maiduguri this evening the Boko Haram sect through their representative one Abu Abdul'aziz said they are formally announcing a cease fire in consideration of popular demand and to give the facilitators the benefit of doubt. Abu Abdul'aziz said to demonstrate their commitment to peace, they are not giving government conditions that may give it reasons to continue to waste public resources without commensurate result.

Part of the conditions as gathered exclusively by DESERT HERALD is that the sect had agreed on its own to lay down their arms and suspend any campaign of violence and killings in whatever form and that they will await federal government actions that will show its commitment to peace and reconciliation with them. The Boko Haram sect through Abu Abdul'aziz also demanded full compensation to all the families of their members that were not killed in the battle field (those that were extra-judiciously executed by the JTF from 2009 to date including their leader Mohammed Yusuf and those that were killed through torture and gun shots while in custody).

Similarly, the sect demanded the release of all their members that were not captured in battle field by the government as well as reconstructing their place of worship (Markas) in Maiduguri and the freedom to practice their religion as they used to do before.

Boko Haram in the first press conference also said that part of the condition for lasting peace is the immediate arrest and prosecution of ex-Governor Ali Modu Sheriff and all the officers that killed their leader and hundreds of their people in 2009 without subjecting them to due process of the law.

They said they will give both the federal government and the Borno State government time to act and that during such time they will not be directly or indirectly involved in any attack and that anybody that attacks or kill within that period is not their member and that there would not be such instruction from their leadership.

Abdul'aziz said they will lay down their arms for the period but that they are not giving their arms because their campaign has not ended until such a time government demonstrates sincere commitment to everlasting peace. They if their freedom to religious practice cannot be guaranteed

the efforts of well meaning Nigeria's may never work and that the little conditions they gave will show to the whole world whether it is the government that is encouraging the violence for its benefit or not.

The spokesman of the Borno Elders Forum who was part of those that attended the press conference, Bulama Mari Gubio confirmed the development to DESERT HERALD.