

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

NIGERIA: ANALYSIS OF THE AIR FORCE RAID IN ADAMAWA STATE

30 JANUARY 2018

On 4 December 2017, the Nigeria Air Force deployed an Alpha Jet and EC 135 attack helicopter to respond to an attack on villages in Demsa and Numan LGA by armed herdsmen. The air raids occurred as hundreds of herdsmen attacked eight villages in Adamawa state to avenge the massacre of up to 51 members of their community, mostly children, the previous month in the nearby village Kikan. On 29 November, amid fears of a reprisal attacks by herdsmen, police announced they would deploy 315 extra officers in the area.

Witnesses from Lawaru, Dong, Kodomti, Shafaron and Nzuruwei villages, described being attacked by a fighter jet and a military helicopter as they attempted to flee. In some villages, the air attacks happened at the same time as the raids, while in other villages the air force arrived shortly afterwards, witnesses told Amnesty International.

Across the five villages visited by Amnesty International, some 3,000 homes were destroyed. As the herdsmen shot people and torched homes, and the air raid resulted in fire, it was not possible to establish how much of the death and destruction was a direct result of the air attacks or attributable to the attack by herdsmen.

Locals in each village provided Amnesty International with lists of the dead, which totalled 86 names. They said that most victims were buried in individual graves but in Dong some 28 victims were buried in a mass grave. Dong and Lawaru had the highest number of fatalities.



 ↑ Overview Map, Basemap © Copernicus Sentinel data (2018)/ESA

Based on witness testimony, field observations, determination of the nature of weapons used as well as analysis of photographic, aerial and satellite images, Amnesty International believes that the air raids caused significant destruction. Witnesses involved in the identification and burial of the victims said that 51 victims had gunshot or machete wounds, while 35 died as a result of the airstrikes.

The Nigerian Air Force's director of public relations, Air Commodore Olatokunbo Adesanya, confirmed the air raid and was quoted in local media describing the air raids as "warning shots – not shots to kill." He said they prompted people to flee the area. Two weeks after the incident Adesanya revised the account, adding that the herdsmen had opened fire on the aircraft.

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LAWARU



On 10 December 2017, most structures in Lawaru appear razed by fire. © 2018 DigitalGlobe, Inc.



Drone footage taken over Lawaru on 21 December 2017, shows a portion of the extensive damage from the attacks. © Amnesty International

DONG

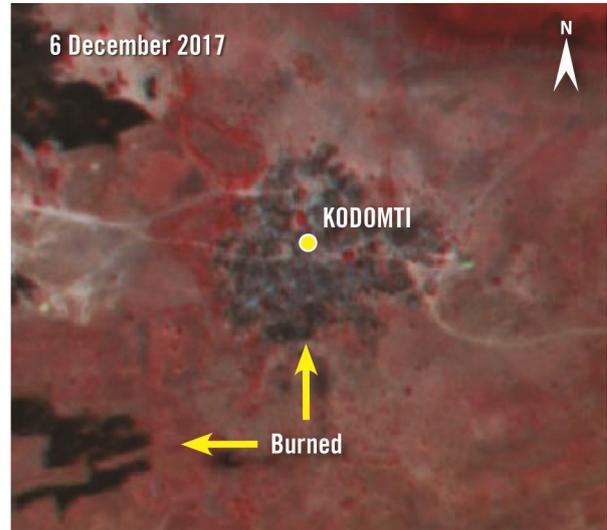
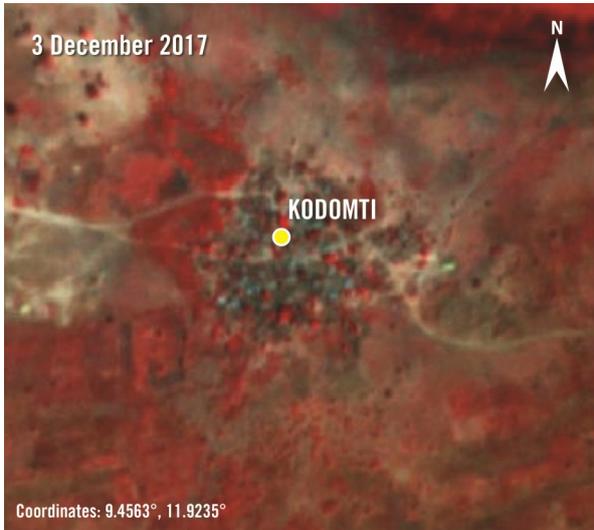


↑ Satellite images comparing area burned in Dong. Top: © CNES 2018, Distribution AIRBUS DS, Bottom: © 2018 DigitalGlobe, Inc., Ground photo: © Amnesty International



Palace in Dong. Witnesses said that the palace was destroyed by a second air raid in the afternoon, after the herdsmen had left. They said they found remnants of the rockets in the palace. © Amnesty International

KODOMTI

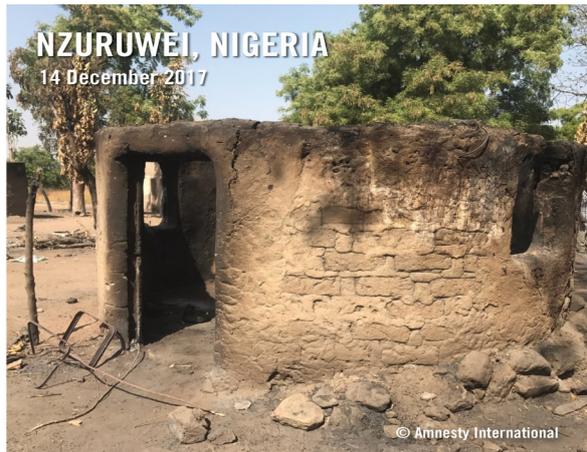


  False-colour infrared imagery from 3 and 6 December 2017, shows Kodomti. Healthy vegetation appears red while unhealthy, or burned, vegetation appears black or brown. On 6 December 2017, burned vegetation is visible within and around the village. Planetscope images © 2018 Planet Labs, Inc.



  Drone footage and ground photos taken in Kodomti after the event, show severely burned structures. Most of the thatched roof huts appear severely burned. People are visible in the village rebuilding after the attacks. © Amnesty International

NZURUWEI



Ground photos taken in Nzuruwei on 14 December 2017, show severely burned structures and trees. © Amnesty International

SHAFARON



False-colour infrared imagery from 3 to 6 December 2017, shows Shafaron. Healthy vegetation appears red while unhealthy, or burned, vegetation appears black or brown. On 4 December a large cloud of smoke is rising from the village. On 6 December 2017, burned vegetation is visible within and around the village. Planetscope images © 2018 Planet Labs, Inc.



 Drone footage and ground photos taken in Shafaron after the attack, show severely burned structures. Almost every thatched roof and fence appears burned. New fencing and grass is visible as villagers begin to rebuild. © Amnesty International

WEAPONS USED

Amnesty International confirmed that the Air Force deployed an Alpha Jet which shot SNEB 68mm rockets at the villages during and after the attack by the herdsmen. Rockets and their remnants were found in Dong, Nzuruwei, Shafaron and Kodomti; while unexploded rockets were found in Shafaron.

Experts identified the munitions as French-made SNEB rockets, which the Air Force is known to use for the Alpha Jets. The 68mm unguided rocket can be fired from "pods" affixed to aircraft. These can be seen on multiple pictures and videos of Nigeria aircrafts, including the below photos published by the Nigerian Air Force which show SNEB pods (circled) and rockets with high explosive warheads. The size and colour of the SNEB rockets, olive green, matches the finish on the rockets photographed after the attack. Though not an unusual colour for ammunition, most of the SNEB rockets of the period appear to brown, rather than green.



Three rockets found after the attack. © Private



Photos of an Alpha Jet with the "pods" (circled) and the weapon systems used.



Remnants of the rockets found in the villages © Amnesty International (left) and © Private (right)



Impact of the rockets fired in Nzuruwei © Amnesty International

When Amnesty International visited the villages, witnesses showed them the impact of the rockets fired. Amnesty could confirm the damage was from explosives and shrapnel, rather than fire.

Witnesses also said the attack helicopter shot at them; experts reviewed photos which show several high velocity rifle rounds.



Two pictures of rifle rounds found after the air raid. © private

METHODOLOGY

Between 6 and 15 December, Amnesty International interviewed 15 witnesses and visited Baya, Lawaru, Dong, Kodomti, Shafaron and Nzuruwei villages. Amnesty International took more than 150 photos and videos of the impact on the ground and the remnants of the rockets found in the villages. The organization also reviewed more than 50 photos taken by witnesses, including 20 pictures of those who were killed in the attacks. In addition, Amnesty International reviewed a video of a controlled explosion of one of the rockets in Shafaron on 12 December.

Amnesty International secured and reviewed satellite and aerial imagery of the villages. The organization also shared photos and videos of the impact, rockets and remnants with weapons experts for analysis.