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AFRICA/NIGERIA - Controversy in Nigeria after the massacre in Baga

Jos (Agenzia Fides) - The heavy fighting in recent days in the village of Baga, a fishing village on the shores of Lake Chad, in Borno State in northeastern Nigeria, where at least 185 people have died, including many are civilians (see Fides 22/04/2013), are the result of an operation conducted by the Multinational Joint Task Force (MJTF), a unit formed by soldiers from Nigeria, Chad, Niger and Cameroon, in charge of ensuring the safety of lake Chad.
Faced with the controversy on the indiscriminate use of weapons in an inhabited place, the command of the MJTF denies the charges and says that its soldiers were attacked by members of Boko Haram who were hiding in the mosque that the military were about to inspect in the research of an arsenal.
The military authorities also tend to redimension the death toll.
According to the command of the MJTF 30 members of Boko Haram died, a military and 6 civilians. The military deny that hundreds of homes have been burned by the military, but report that the homemade bombs launched by members of Boko Haram have destroyed thirty thatched huts.
Among the recovered weapons there are assault rifles, ammunition and several improvised explosive devices (IEDs).
Other witnesses, however, say that the army has made a real retaliation against civilians accused of having protected the men who killed a military officer. President Goodluck Jonathan has promised an investigation to evaluate the behavior of the military. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 25/04/2013)

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