Nigeria: Nearly 300 freed women, children led to safety

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They were among a group of 275 children and women rescued from Boko Haram extremists, the first to arrive at a refugee camp on the weekend after a three-day journey to safety, brought by Nigeria's military.

They came from the Sambisa Forest, the last stronghold of the Islamic extremists, where the Nigerian military said it has rescued more than 677 girls and women and destroyed more than a dozen insurgent camps in the past week.

Two newborns were among the first arrivals.

"Boko Haram killed the father of this child," Lami Musa told The Associated Press, cradling a four-day-old girl with black curls glistening with sweat in the 104-degrees Fahrenheit (40-degrees Celsius) heat.

TEARS CAME TO HER EYES

Tears came to her eyes when she was asked if she has other children: "Three of them. Boko Haram killed my husband and grabbed me. I have no idea where my other children are." She said she lost her family in an attack by the militants on her village of Lassa in December.

The baby was born the day before the group set off from the Sambisa for a refugee camp in Yola, the capital of Adamawa state, crammed into the backs of rickety, open pickup trucks.

On the trip's first day, one military vehicle escorting the group exploded a landmine, wounding two soldiers, according to a soldier travelling with them. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorised to speak to journalists.

Soldiers on foot then swept the road ahead of the convoy, he said, so it took three days to travel potholed roads for the 300 kilometres (200 miles) southwest to Yola.