



Going back to basics: The past as prologue, by Adamu Wazirin Fika

Page 9



8 Nigerian pilgrims die in Saudi Arabia

Page 2



Gunmen bomb 2 banks in Saminaka

● Kill police inspector, 2 others

● Boko Haram owns up for Saminaka, Gombe

From Isa Sa'idu, Kaduna & Hamza Idris, Maiduguri

DAREDEVIL gunmen attacked two banks and a police station in Saminaka, Lere local government area of Kaduna State in the early hours of yesterday killing three people, including a police inspector. They also

injured two other persons.

The gunmen, who stormed the town at around 2am, were said to have used sophisticated weapons and heavy explosives to destroy the strong room of a first generation bank in the town. They carted away all the money they could find. Many

town residents refused to discuss the incident with our reporter yesterday, for fear of what could happen to them, being the first such incident ever in the area.

However, a teacher in one of the secondary schools in Saminaka town told *Daily Trust*, "Nobody can tell you who the gun-

men really are. My house is close to both the police station and the two banks. I was fast asleep when, as if in a dream, I began to hear heavy sounds like that of thunder. I woke up but I did not make any attempt to go outside as the sound of sophisticated weapons

Continued on page 5

Gunmen bomb 2 banks in Saminaka

Continued from page 1

explosions became unbearable. At first I thought it was my house that was being attacked because the noise was very near.

"The gunmen successfully conducted their operation uninterrupted as neither the residents nor the police dared to go near them. When we went out in the morning, we discovered that they completely destroyed the Saminaka police division. With my own eyes I have seen three corpses."

Daily Trust's correspondent gathered that after the gunmen destroyed the police station, in the process killing a police inspector and a crime suspect who was being detained there, they moved to a first generation bank branch nearby.

The school teacher said, "It was obvious that they used explosives to destroy the back entrance of the bank in order to gain access into the banking hall and subsequently to the bank's safes. After they finished their operation in the first generation bank, according to other security men, a guard attached to a second generation bank that is adjacent to the one they attacked flashed them with his torchlight. This made the gunmen to pursue him up to the room where he locked himself in. They brought him out, cut off the hand he used in flashing them and slaughtered him like a ram. Those of us who went to the scene early, we saw Naira notes all over the precincts of the bank."

Another resident, who resides in Ungwan Bawa, about five kil-

ometres away from the scene of the incident, said the heavy sound of explosions woke him up. He said, "Despite the distance, at first we thought that the attack was right at our doorsteps. I am not an expert in handling weapons but the sound of those weapons indicated that they were sophisticated and I am sure no police weapon can match those of the gunmen, not to talk of civilians like us."

Confirming the incident, the deputy chairman of Lere local government Alhaji Kabir Tahir Malali said nobody can tell what the mission of the gunmen was, saying "but we suspect that they are armed robbers because of the way they attacked the banks."

In the same vein, the Police Public Relations Officer of Kaduna State command said the police only confirmed the death of two people. "We are only aware of two deaths, the police inspector and a security man of one of the banks."

When Daily Trust arrived the scene of the incident yesterday evening, it was gathered that the state commissioner of police, Balah M. Nasarawa, had visited the scene where he promised to fish out the perpetrators of the act.

Meanwhile, leaders of the Jama'atu Ahlus Sunnati Lidda'awati Wal Jihad, also known as Boko Haram said that they were responsible for the killing of Zakariyya Isa, a reporter with the Nigeria Television Authority's (NTA) Maiduguri Network Centre.

The group has also claimed responsibility for Saturday night's multiple attacks on police station

and banks in Saminaka, Kaduna State as well as last week's attack on a Mopol barracks in Kwami, Gombe State.

The group said Zakariyya was killed because he was "an informant of security agencies." Spokesman of the group, Abul-Qaqa who spoke on phone said, "Zakariyya was not killed in error. We killed him because he was spying on us."

There were earlier speculations that Zakariyya was a victim of "mistaken identity" because this is the first time that a journalist was killed since the beginning of the violence in Maiduguri, but Abul-Qaqa said the killing was "carefully planned and executed."

According to him, "We have ample evidence beyond reasonable doubt that he was giving vital information to security agencies on our modus-operandi... We investigated thoroughly before we killed him."

Asked to give more details on what the late journalist did, Qaqa said, "He gave information to security agents that led to the arrest of many of our members." He added, "We sent him a text and told him that we would visit him. We killed him not because he was a journalist, but because of his personal misconduct. His actions were against the ethics of his profession."

"And I want to tell you that we have no grudge against journalists that are working in line with the professional provisions of their work. Whenever they misquote or misrepresent our position, we normally call them and tell them to correct the error,"

Qaqa said. He said the group will not hesitate to kill anybody that "steps on our toes." According to him, "Zakariyya was responsible for his actions and the consequences that followed. Nobody, no matter who, can go free if he or she spies on us."

On the issue of dialogue, Qaqa said, "We cannot talk on that because it makes no sense to us. How can you talk of dialogue when government and security agencies are busy arresting and persecuting our members?" He said the group will continue to attack government and security formations in Nigeria.

When contacted on phone, Borno State police commissioner Simeon Midenda said he was in Abuja. Efforts to speak to officials of the Joint Task Force (JTF) were not successful. Colonel Victor Ebhaleme, the head of field operations of the JTF did not answer a call to his line.

The killing of Zakariyya had sent jitters into the nerves of journalists in Maiduguri, with many thinking on how to strike a balance in covering the crisis in the state. Late Zakariyya, who worked as a cameraman and Hausa translator at the NTA, was shot at close range on Saturday night in front of his house at Bulunkutu area of Maiduguri. Witnesses said two gunmen trekked to the house and shot him in the head and chest before they fled.

A native of Potiskum local government area of Yobe State, Zakariyya had worked at the Maiduguri network centre of the NTA for many years. He left behind two wives and two.