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40 killed in Maiduguri night raid

Written by Hamza Idris & Yahaya Ibrahim, Maiduguri Saturday, 03 November 2012 05:00

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Forty people have been killed on Wednesday, allegedly by operatives of the Joint Task Force during a night raid in Budun, Kalari, Tandari and Gamboru areas of Maiduguri, the Borno capital, Weekly Trust learnt yesterday.

Officials of the military have refused to comment on the allegation, but many parents, children were picked by security operatives, alleged "unprovoked arrest and summary execution of youths."

A guard close to the morgue at the State Specialist Hospital in Maiduguri said 15 corpses deposited in the hospital in the early hours of Thursday and additional 24 later in the day.

"Uniformed men deposited 39 bodies here," he said.

"The bodies were brought here in pickup vans. Towards the evening, families of the deceased came and took away most of the bodies. The refrigerators in the mortuary are filled up with bodies and therefore, any additional corpse must be kept on the ground," he said.

Residents said the figure may be higher, because some dead bodies were dropped by the Government and Custom bridges.

Abubakar Musa, a resident of Gamboru area said, "In our area, a father lost at least three children at a go...they were arrested in the dead of the night and taken away," he said.

"Uniformed men who stormed our area around 11pm on Wednesday, scaled the fences of residential houses and carefully selected men who are between the ages of 10 and 30 and took them away," he said.

According to him, "The arrests were carried out simultaneously in Kalari, Tandari and Budun....women, children and old men were not arrested," he said.

Another resident of Tandari said four youths were picked in the house next to his. "The place where the youths were picked is next to mine," he said, adding, "when their father, who is my friend, went to the barracks to enquire about his children, he was asked to go and look for them elsewhere" the resident said.

The alleged killings took place few hours before the Amnesty International released its report on human rights excesses by military operatives in the course of carrying out their assignment.

The JTF had since denied the incident, even as similar indictment was made by Transparency International few weeks ago.