

Yobe Potiskum 14 DAILY TRUST



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DPO killed as gunmen target emir's palace

From Hamza Idris, Maiduguri &
Abdulkadir Badsha Mukhtar, Abuja

A divisional police officer and at least
13 other people were killed when
gunmen launched a pre-dawn attack in

Potiskum yesterday, targeting the Emir
of Fika's palace and a divisional police
headquarters.

This was the second time insurgents
targeted the Emir of Fika, Alhaji
Muhammadu Abali Ibn Muhammadu

Idrissa, the first being through a suicide
bombing attack at a Friday prayer mosque
on August 3.

In yesterday's strike, gunmen suspected
to be members of the Boko Haram
sect stormed the area firing shots, and

attempted to destroy the palace and the
adjoining divisional police office.

Residents said the police resisted the
attack, resulting in a shootout in which
the divisional police officer in charge of

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DPO killed as gunmen target emir's palace

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Potiskum, Muhammad Ali, was killed.

At least 13 other people who military authorities said were insurgents died during the incident, though locals believe civilians might have also been killed by stray bullets.

The divisional police station that was attacked yesterday was burnt down by suspected Boko Haram attackers in 2009 and rebuilt in 2011.

Residents of Potiskum said explosions and gunfire echoed through the town for over three hours yesterday.

The attackers also set fire to the Unity Bank branch in the area.

A resident told *Daily Trust*: "We can only ascertain the casualty figure when things normalize, for now all of us have been forced to remain indoors. A friend told me that a

comprehensive house-to-house search is ongoing."

Sources said sect members also attempted to burn some telecommunication masts in the town but failed.

The Joint Task Force (JTF) spokesman, Lieutenant Eli Lazarus, said they recovered three dead bodies of the "suspected terrorists" and at least ten other bodies have been carried away by the attackers.

"The DPO died in the hospital as a result of the gunshot injuries he sustained during the attack," Lazarus said.

A security source told *Daily Trust*, "The DPO was killed in a cross fire while supplying ammunition to the police who engaged the insurgents before the arrival of JTF operatives."

Daily Trust gathered that the attackers had earlier trailed the emir's convoy on his way back to Potiskum from Kaduna but could not

penetrate the motorcade.

Residents of Unguwar Bolawa which is near the palace said they had sleepless night as a result of heavy explosions and gunshots between 1.30am and 6am.

"We couldn't sleep all night long... it was as if the whole battle took place at my backyard. We have been traumatized and as I am talking to you now there is still tension in the town," one resident said.

A resident who did not give his name told the BBC Hausa that the incident started around 1:46am. He said he was woken up by the sound of gunfire which went on till morning.

Yobe State has seen deadly violence linked to the Boko Haram insurgency since last year. Apart from the state capital Damaturu, Potiskum is the worst hit, leaving hundreds dead and social and economic life crippled.