

50 INSURGENTS, 24 CIVILIANS KILLED IN BORNO

Category: Cover stories Published on Saturday, 07 September 2013 05:02 Written by Hamza Idris, Maiduguri Hits: 808



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Kashim
Shettima

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Troops using fighter jets have killed 50 suspected members of the Boko Haram sect who had earlier murdered many civilians in villages in Nganzai and Konduga Local Government Areas of Borno State, spokesman of the newly established 7 Division of the Nigerian Army, Maiduguri, Lt Col Sagir Musa, said yesterday.

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But latest information from witnesses indicate that the Boko Haram insurgents had killed 24 civilians, nine in Bulabulin Ngabura of Konduga Local Government Area and 15 others in Gajiran, the headquarters of Nganzai Local Government Area.

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It was also gathered that in Bulabulin Ngabura, the insurgents have kidnapped a man, his wife and three children, a development which sources said prompted the military to deploy fighter jets to arrest the insurgents.

Col Musa in Maiduguri yesterday, said the insurgents were trailed to their operational camps by ground troops and military fighter jets.

According to him, "troops of the 5 Brigade of the 7 Division of the Nigerian Army have effectively repelled Boko Haram terrorists attack on Gajiran and Bulabulin Ngabura communities in Nganzai and Konduga Local Government Areas of Borno State.

"Troops pursued the terrorists to their camps with air support and about 50 insurgents were killed in a shootout.

"Subsequently, the villages have been rescued from the insurgents. At the moment, the Brigade troops are pursuing the remnants of the fleeing terrorists by blocking all possible escape routes," Sagir said.

Weekly Trust gathered from locals that the Boko Haram terrorists, numbering over 40 reportedly attacked Gajiran, 75 kilometres from Maiduguri and killed 15 locals around noon on Wednesday. They also burnt the council secretariat, market, police station and hospital.

A local trader who came to Maiduguri from the area yesterday said, "the insurgents came in the afternoon, some of them in military uniforms and others with hooded face and opened fire in the market, after accusing our people of conniving with security forces.

"They (insurgents) were well armed with heavy guns. When they successfully attacked the people, they fled to the bush, but the military came after about an hour and pursued them," he said.

Another source said insurgents had tried to bring down a military plane with a rocket launcher. "The camp of the insurgents which was recently established was not more than five kilometers away from Gajiran. We saw when the military aircraft came and we saw when it retreated back for a while when the insurgents targeted it. It (the plane) went back again and again but left the place after some time," he said.

And in Bulabulin Ngabura which is 50 kilometres from the state capital, the insurgents, numbering about 30 reportedly killed nine people and abducted a family of five.

Musa Lado, a taxi driver of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) who arrived at the scene of the attack minutes after the insurgents left, told journalists in Maiduguri that the insurgents killed nine people,

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including Alhaji Mohammed Sani (A Banje) an aide to Borno State Governor, Kashim Shettima.

"A man, his wife and three children were also abducted by the insurgents who dressed in military uniforms and mounted a huge roadblock around 10am on Thursday," he said.

The driver said he had confirmed that the abducted man was from Miringa district of Biu Local Government Area in southern part of Borno State.

"We assisted in putting the 406 car of the abducted man into a truck. The attackers did not take it away, they only forced him and his family into a different vehicle and whisked them away," he said.

Other sources who came to Maiduguri said some of the victims were slaughtered while others were shot by the insurgents.

"The insurgents are angry with the people of Borno State who have turned their backs against them. The coming of the civilian JTF is a big minus to the insurgents," Bakura Bamusa, a yam dealer said.

Weekly Trust reports that in the last two months, the Boko Haram insurgents have moved their activities to villages outside Maiduguri and have killed many people even as the locals have kept on cooperating with security forces.

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