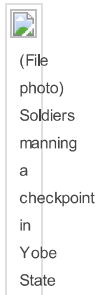


DOZENS FEARED DEAD AS BOKO HARAM ATTACKS DAMATURU



Category: Cover stories Published on Saturday, 26 October 2013 05:02

Written by Hamza Idris, Ibrahim Saw ab, Maiduguri & Hamisu Kabiru Matazu, Damaturu Hits: 831



. Many travelers caught in crossfire

. Curfew imposed on Yobe

Dozens, including soldiers, police, civilians and insurgents had been killed on Thursday when gunmen suspected to be members of the Boko Haram launched multiple attacks in various locations in Damaturu, the Yobe State capital.

The development led to the imposition of dusk-to-dawn curfew by the military

32

[Tweet](#)
[Share](#)

7

[Like](#)

1

authorities. The curfew was later reviewed to commence from 4pm to 7am daily across the state, starting from today.

Residents of Damaturu said the attacks started around 5.30pm of Thursday and fighting between insurgents and security forces continued till around 1am of yesterday.

"It was a coordinated onslaught by the insurgents. They divided themselves into so many groups. No one can tell you how many people have been killed, but the truth is the casualty must be high," a resident who narrowly escaped said.

Security sources told Weekly Trust that some of the areas attacked include the headquarters of the 233 Battalion of the Nigerian Army in Kukareta located on the Damaturu-Maiduguri road; the police Criminal Investigation Department (CID) office, police area command office, Mobile Base and C Division police station all along Gujba road, Damaturu. Many checkpoints, public buildings and private residential quarters were also attacked.

A statement by the spokesman of 3 Division Special Operation Battalion, Captain Eli Lazarus confirmed the attacks in the state capital, saying 21 insurgents were killed on Thursday.

The statement reads: "At about 5:30 pm Wednesday 24 October, 2013, gunmen in large number suspected to be Boko Haram terrorists attacked a military checkpoint close to the NNPC Mega Station along Damaturu-Maiduguri road. Troops of 3 Division Special Operation Battalion had a fierce encounter with the terrorists in various parts of Damaturu the Yobe state capital for several hours.

"Twenty one of the terrorists were killed during the encounter while three of their vehicles were recovered. Other items recovered include; 4 AK 47 Rifles, 1 FN Rifle, 1 rocket Propelled grenade, 1 Rocket Propelled Grenade bomb (RPG), 1 extra barrel of GPMG, several improvised explosive devices [IEDs] and 709 rounds of assorted ammunition. A 24-hour curfew was imposed across the state to enable troops conduct pursuit on the fleeing terrorists. Residents are advised to obey the curfew.

"Law abiding citizens are enjoined to remain calm as the 3 Division Special Operation Battalion is on top of the situation. Any credible information should be passed promptly to security agencies for necessary action," he said. Though the statement did not say anything on casualty figure on the side of security operatives and civilians, a security source said more than 20 soldiers might have been killed at Kukareta military barracks.

A health official involved in the evacuation of victims said he counted 31 dead bodies of people in military uniforms.

TOP STORIES

Dozens feared dead as Boko Haram attacks Damaturu

Suntai : One year after crash Governor taking advantage of constitutional lacuna, say lawyers

Agatu becoming another 'killing field'

Court bars Baraje faction from parading self as PDP

Suicide bombers now package IEDs in school bags

Living, dying on the Niger

WHY BOKO HARAM CHANGED TACTICS

Agagu buried in Ondo amidst tight security

From 'Apo Six' to 'Apo Eight'

2015: There'll be no election, if... - Tunji Braithwaite

I'm not happy with politics in Nigeria - Emir

Boko Haram: 8 killed, 17 injured in Abuja

Eggon, Alago clash: 65 corps members trapped in Nasarawa

Jonathan's blow to affirmative action

50 insurgents, 24 civilians killed in Borno

"One thing I cannot tell is whether the people killed are real soldiers or impersonators," he said, adding that "many policemen had been killed in some of their formations that have been attacked. Similarly, there are dozens of travelers who were caught in crossfire," he said.

"The corpses of civilians killed on the highway are many," he said. "We are just evacuating and taking them to hospital," he added.

Weekly Trust learnt that the attackers disguised in military wears and drove vehicles painted in military colours before beating a heavily fortified security checkpoint to attack the 233 Battalion headquarters.

Residents also said the attackers used many rocket propelled grenades (RPGs), anti aircraft missiles and IEDs which created panic and disorganized social and economic life of the people in Damaturu and environs.

Witnesses said the checkpoint located close to the NNPC Mega Station, where the insurgents launched their first offensive, is the biggest checkpoint in the state capital.

"I can confirm to you that at the major checkpoint, they killed some security operatives and travelers who were waiting to be cleared in order to proceed with their journey," a resident said.

Another resident said "about the same time, a different set of the insurgents stormed the adjoining housing estate and set some red brick houses ablaze. They hurled explosives in some of the houses and only God knows what happened to the occupants of the houses. My neighbour's house was destroyed and is still burning," a resident of the housing estate said.

At the YBC quarters, along Gujba road, a resident said the attackers also stormed the Damaturu Police Mobile Base around 8:30pm which lasted till around 1:00am.

"We couldn't sleep throughout the night due to sound of heavy explosions and gunshots," he said.

A police officer in the barrack who narrowly escaped being killed by the assailants said many of his colleagues were killed after engaging the insurgents, but could not give exact figure or ascertain whether women and children were among the casualties.

"The attackers drove into the mobile base in large numbers using 4 Hilux vans and motorcycles," he said.

"It was only when we got reinforcement that we countered them, but the fact is that they have done a lot of damage," he said.

Weekly Trust further gathered that the insurgents stormed the Sani Abacha Specialists Hospital where corpses of victims were taken to, broke into the hospital's pharmacy and took away drugs and other medical equipment.

"But they didn't hurt anybody. They simply packed our medicaments and left," he said.

As at the time of filing this report, military helicopters and fighter jets were patrolling the skies of Damaturu while all the residents remained indoors. Hundreds of travelers going to Maiduguri from other parts of the country were stranded on the outskirts of the town following the complete banning of movement of vehicles.

Weekly Trust recalled that on November 4, 2011, there were similar attacks on Damaturu which left dozens of people dead.

Security agents, clerics and dozens of civilians had been killed while many buildings, including the state police headquarters, the two-storey building housing anti terrorism squad, parts of the immigrations office and the federal secretariat; the central post office in the town, the headquarters of the Pilgrims commission as well as countless structures symbolizing authority were attacked by the insurgents.

[NEXT >](#)
[Like](#)

 7 people like this. [Sign Up](#) to see what your friends like.

1

[Share this on Google+](#)
[Tweet](#) 32

[Pin it](#)
[ADD COMMENT](#)
 Name (required)

 E-mail (required, but will not display)

 Website
