

Gunmen abduct 97 as troops rescue 23 women in Baga

From Hamza Idris & Yahaya Ibrahim,
Maiduguri

Ninety seven youths were forcefully taken away on Sunday after many others were killed by Boko Haram gunmen in Hadaija village and neighbouring communities in Doron Baga, Kukawa LGA of Borno State, witnesses said yesterday.

Doron Baga is a prominent village along the shores of the Lake Chad in northern part of Borno State. The area is dotted with dozens of fishing and farming communities that have been severally attacked by insurgents.

Stories of happenings in the communities are rarely heard because their communication facilities have been vandalized. Survivors that made it to Maiduguri yesterday told journalists that most of those abducted are between the ages of 15 and 30, adding that they were taken away at gunpoint. Usmanu Yusuf, a fisherman, feared that the youths may probably be indoctrinated by the Boko Haram to fight for them and called on relevant authorities to rescue them.

He added that the Boko Haram returned to the ravaged communities Wednesday with the intention of abducting more youths but were confronted by Nigerian troops.

"Over 30 insurgents and some soldiers were killed during the encounter while 23 women were rescued after they were abducted from many communities," he said. There was no statement from the military or police authorities in Maiduguri on the recent happenings in Baga. Mohammed Gava, a local vigilante commander in Maiduguri, confirmed that they were aware of the troubles ravaging communities in northern Borno. "The terrorists abducted dozens of youths around Baga on Sunday but when they returned on Wednesday, they met their Waterloo because about 30 of them were killed. Over 20 women were also rescued. Similarly, some the surviving insurgents succeeded in fleeing with some girls in boats across the Lake Chad," he said.