

GUNMEN KILL 31 IN NORTHERN BORNO



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Gunmen suspected to be members of the Boko Haram sect killed 31 people early yesterday in three villages in Marte local government area along the shores of the Lake Chad in northern part of Borno State. Witnesses said many insurgents armed with various weapons, including petrol bombs, attacked Kirenoa, Nura and Naforu villages where they also destroyed houses, business premises and food stores.

One of the escapees said 18 people were killed in Kirenoa and 12 others in Nura and Nufora villages. Kirenoa is a border town between Nigeria and Cameroon and is 132 kilometres north of Maiduguri, the state capital. Weekly Trust recalls that it was in Kirenoa that a major camp of the Boko Haram was destroyed shortly after the declaration of state of emergency in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States in May 2013.

Before the state of emergency, the insurgents had taken over the town, chased away security operatives, hoisted their flags, and forced the locals to embrace their doctrine. Farmer Bukar Fannami said this time around, the militants appeared to be on a reprisal and did not make any attempt to stay behind after accomplishing their mission. "They came with Improvised Explosives Devices (IEDs), set several houses, a mosque and shops ablaze.

"As we ran for safety to other villages, we were ambushed by another set of the invaders who started firing sporadically... Some fell on the ground, while others were shot in their backs and legs," Fannami said. He said the attackers took away beans, rice, millet and livestock, stressing that the security operatives in the area did their best but were overwhelmed by the large number of the attackers who had superior weapons.

There is no statement on the attack from security agencies in Borno State, who normally send their reports to the Defence Headquarters in Abuja. Boko Haram insurgents have stepped up attacks on villages and towns outside the state capital and have killed hundreds of people this year alone.

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Page:1 / 4