

BOKO HARAM KILL EMIR OF GWOZA

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The late Emir of Gwoza

- .Two other monarchs escape
- .Palace guards still missing
- .Convoy vehicles burnt by attackers

Tragedy struck in Borno State yesterday when gunmen suspected to be members of Boko Haram attacked a convoy of three first class monarchs and succeeded in killing the Emir of Gwoza, Alhaji Idrissa Timta, aged 72. Emir of Askira, Alhaji Abdullahi Ibn Muhammadu Askirama and the Emir of Uba, Alhaji Ali Ibn Ismaila Mamza narrowly escaped the ambush.

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The insurgents, who reportedly stormed the highway with sophisticated weapons, accosted the monarchs on their way to Gombe State for the funeral prayers of the Emir of Gombe, Alhaji Usman Shehu Abubakar.

Many people in their entourage, including policemen reportedly sustained injuries from bullet wounds, while others are still missing, including palace guards.

Late Idrissa Timta is the first Emir to be killed by Boko Haram, even though the group has made attempts on the lives of the Shehu of Borno, the Emir of Kano and that of Fika.

Secretary to Borno State government, Ambassador Baba Ahmed Jidda confirmed the incident in a press statement yesterday. "The Emir was killed around 9am today (yesterday) following a bloody attack by gunmen believed to be members of Boko Haram along Tashan Alade on the way to Biu town in Southern Borno State.

The statement said the late Emir of Gwoza had visited his counterpart, the Emir of Uba yesterday and passed the night there ahead of their planned trip today. The two Emirs were later joined by the Emir of Askira and the trio drove in the same vehicle with the intention of being joined by their counterpart in Biu. "Unfortunately, as they were driving in convoy to Biu, they were ambushed," the report continued.

The statement said the late Emir was in the first class status following his recent elevation by Governor Kashim Shettima and was a great man who worked very hard to promote peace and progress in Gwoza.

Earlier reports indicated that only the Emir of Gwoza and that of Uba were travelling in one car while that of Askira was not even in the entourage. Other sources said the driver of the Emir of Askira, who was trailing behind, made a detour before getting to the point of the attack.

Sources close to the monarchs said when their vehicles came under heavy gunfire, the driver had to stop and the Emirs attempted to flee. "The emir of Askira and that of Uba took to the bushes but that of Gwoza, who was elderly, could not run," one of the sources said.

A source from Uba Emirate Council said the corpse of the Emir of Gwoza was later found in the bushes, riddled with bullet wounds. According to him, "Two policemen in the convoy were also shot dead, while most of the vehicles in the convoy were set ablaze by the attackers."

Government House sources say Governor Kashim Shettima has flown back from Abuja, with Senator Ali Ndume (Borno South) in company of other top government functionaries for the funeral prayers which may likely hold today, Saturday.

Late Idrissa Timta, said to be one of the oldest emirs in Borno, and northern Nigeria left behind wives and children.

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In April, the late Emir of Gwoza issued a press statement in which he lamented the spate of the attacks on his people and called on the Federal Government to take serious action. A portion of it reads: "It is unfortunate that our people have witnessed increased attacks with mass killings by the insurgents in the last four months. The attacks have crippled both social and economic lives in the entire area. It is sad to say that my people have been blocked from going to the market by the insurgents, who kill at will. Even the crops cultivated by them have ended up seized by the insurgents."

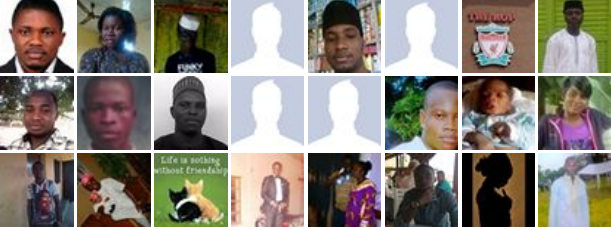
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