

**BOKO HARAM'S RESURGENCE IN NORTH-EAST**

# AGAIN, SUICIDE BOMBER WREAKS HAVOC IN YOBE

- Kills 8, Wounds 32
- Why Insurgents Recaptured Marte – Army

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**A**n underage suicide bomber yesterday detonated a bomb at a crowded motor park in Damaturu, Yobe State capital, killing herself, eight others and injuring 30 other persons.

Sunday Trust gathered that the

incident happened around 10:40 am when the bomb on the teenager's body went off while she queued up for security check at the crowded entrance of the motor park.

"She blew herself up amidst the crowd at the park's entrance. Women, children and traders were affected." Malam Bura Gana, a trader that sustained wounds from bomb shrapnel said.

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# Suicide bomber wreaks havoc in Yobe

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Another eye witness, Muhammad Zanna, revealed that the suicide bomber was a teenage girl of around 12 years old.

"I saw the remains of the girl that carried out the suicide attack and she should be around 12 years old, because her face and body size is very small," he said.

Our correspondent who visited the scene saw dead bodies, mutilated body parts, and blood stains of traders, women and children.

A security operative at the scene warned our correspondent not to go near the remains of the bomber until experts arrived to dismantle two active bombs strapped round her body.

"It's not safe to go any closer because there are two more explosive strapped round her body that didn't explode," he said.

The Principal Medical Officer of Sani Abacha Specialist Hospital, Dr Garba Fika confirmed receiving 32 injured persons, adding that one person died in the hospital.

"Thirty-two people were brought injured, one of them died here, and I have just been updated that six corpses have been deposited at the hospital morgue," he said.

Another source in the hospital revealed that two more people from the 31 injured died hours after the Principal Medical Officer briefed newsmen.

Thousands of relatives and sympathizers in Damaturu have trooped into the hospital to identify their loved ones.

Meanwhile, Governor Ibrahim Gaidam, who visited the blast victims immediately in the hospital, condemned the attack, saying that "suicide bombing will soon be a thing of the past."

The governor sympathized with the blast victims saying they should have faith in God and consider the attack as destiny from Him.

"We cannot question the act of Almighty God, he destined it to happen and we shall by the grace of

God pray and see to the end of it, God willing."

He also directed the hospital authorities to speed up treatments and work out modalities for referral in case of urgent medical need.

He condoled with families of those killed in the blast and advised residents to be more vigilant and to always assist security agents in the fight against terrorism.

Gaidam pledged that his administration will give more support in the fight against terror, calling on people to continue praying for peace in the state and country as a whole.

## TROOPS SEARCH FOR 600 SUICIDE BOMBERS

Security forces are in search of over 600 female suicide bombers who were allegedly dispatched by leaders of the Boko Haram to wreak havoc on Maiduguri, sources close to the operation said.

The Deputy Governor of Borno State, Zannah Umar Mustapha, had on Friday confirmed to newsmen that 600 women and girls had been mobilized by Boko Haram terrorists as suicide bombers with the aim of causing multiple explosions in the town.

According to him, "It is unfortunate that we are experiencing yet another attack in Maiduguri at this time that we were thinking that the insurgency has subsided, following the taking over of Sambisa forest by the military.

"Our thought was that movements of the insurgents would be restricted to a certain area after they were sacked from the Sambisa forest; but this has not been the case, because the insurgents have been fleeing to other communities.

"Initially we were opposed to the suggestion made by the military on the 24-hour curfew but when we received a security report that about 600 women have been kitted as suicide bombers and are to be sneaked into Maiduguri during the attack, coupled with the gory pictures of some of the women who detonated themselves during the

attack, we had no option than to okay the curfew," he said.

This is coming in the wake of a set back on the fight against insurgency in the northeast following this weekend's recapture of Marte town by Boko Haram insurgents in the northern part of Borno State.

*Sunday Trust* reports that hundreds of Boko Haram militants had made an attempt to take over Maiduguri on Wednesday after they wreaked havoc on the villages of Kayamla and Bale Galtimari in Kunduga Local Government Area, while on their way to the state capital, security sources said.

The villages are less than 25 kilometers to the state capital along Maiduguri-Bama Road.

Over 70 civilians were killed in the two villages. It was gathered that while preparing to take over Maiduguri, the assailants reportedly primed the bodies of over 600 women and girls with various explosives so that they would partake in various attacks in the metropolis.

On arrival in Maiduguri towards evening of Wednesday, the insurgents were confronted by troops from the 7 Division of the Nigerian Army while making an attempt to attack the 21 Armoured Brigade Giwa barracks.

In the process, three female suicide bombers, who disguised as women in distress, succeeded in killing six vigilantes and injured twelve others.

The situation necessitated the declaration of a 24-hour curfew on Maiduguri that lasted for three days. It was only relaxed on Saturday, allowing people to now move between 8am and 5pm.

Security sources said the curfew was to facilitate the easy arrest of the female suicide bombers.

On Thursday, nine of them were reportedly killed by troops at a plantation in Fouri area, not far from the Giwa barracks.

It was also learnt that several arrests were carried out through

the combined efforts of soldiers, policemen and operatives of the State Security Service (SSS).

Similarly, the recapturing of Marte, a border town between Nigeria and Cameroon, along the shores of the Lake Chad adds a new perspective to the regional offensive that aims at recovering swaths of territories once captured by the Boko Haram.

Marte had served as refuge for the dreaded sect members because it was there that they established their first major camp after they were sacked from Maiduguri in 2013.

They were dislodged from the area in May, 2013 shortly after the declaration of a state of emergency in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states.

Friday's recapture of the town marked the fourth time that the insurgents held sway in the farming community.

Security sources said the insurgents found their way back to Marte after they fled the famous Sambisa forest and other strongholds in Bama and Gwoza.

"We strongly suspect that they regrouped in Marte after they fled the fire power in Sambisa, but we would pursue them," one of the sources said.

The deputy governor also confirmed the recapture of Marte by Boko Haram terrorists.

"It is sad as we have been made to understand that Marte is today completely fallen under the control of the insurgents, which to us is a very huge set back," he said.

Observers believe that there are lapses in the counter insurgency approach, especially the recent operations in Sambisa.

"We saw video footages showing Nigerian Air Force monitoring the Massa out flux of the terrorists out of the Sambisa forest... This is a bad PR for the military operation," said retired Major Salihu Ibrahim.

"Can you monitor your enemy and then you said he or they are in disarray, you just allowed them to flee and you think they would not regroup and inflict worst trouble?"

he asked.

## WHY INSURGENTS RECAPTURED MARTE - ARMY

Meanwhile, the Nigerian military authorities have said that there is no cause for alarm over the recapture of Marte by the insurgents.

The military disclosed that Marte had been a deserted town before the recent reported incursion of terrorists in the area, insisting that efforts were being made to address any untoward development.

On its twitter handle, the Defence Headquarters stated that "there has not been any static deployment of troops in Marte for quite sometimes in line with the need to emphasise more aggressive patrol of many threatened isolated communities while the assault on the forests and mountain hideouts of terrorists is ongoing.

"Only occasional patrols and surveillance have been undertaken towards the area as the bulk of troops are engaged in the operation to clear the terrorists from all identified enclaves in the forest.

"Besides, Marte had been deserted by citizens, most of whom had fled to other towns while others are in IDP camps located in Maiduguri and other places.

"It is understandable that those terrorists escaping from the offensive operations in Sambisa and other enclaves are looking for place of respite. They must have found Marte deserted and decided to harbour there. Now that their presence is reported, the issue will definitely be addressed in a very short while.

"There is really no cause for alarm in the way some reports are presenting this situation as if it is a meaningful resurgence of terrorists. This will only fool the terrorists and their sympathizers into false celebration "There will certainly be no respite for terrorists anywhere in Nigeria. Wait and see."