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Fears over Boko Haram resurgence after 30 killed

By Olatunji Omirin (Maiduguri), Ismail Mudashir & Haruna Ibrahim (Abuja) | Published Date Jun 18, 2019 5:11 AM



Red Cross officials attend to victims of a triple suicide bombings, which occurred outside a hall filled with football fans in Konduga, 38 kilometres (24 miles) from the Borno state capital, Maiduguri, yesterday, where 30 people were killed

- *Families, victims recount ordeal*

Lack of prompt medical attention was responsible for the death toll in Sunday's multiple suicide bombings at Mandarari community of Konduga Local government area of Borno State, rescue officials and family of victims told the Daily Trust yesterday.

Mandarari is farther away from Konduga town which is 25 kilometres, southeast of Maiduguri, the state capital

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The attacks have elicited fears in locals living in neighbouring communities, with sources saying as the raining season sets in, such attacks could be common unless the military and other security operatives change their tactics.

Witnesses said at Mandarari where Sunday's triple blasts occurred, security officials barricaded a viewing centre and nearby spots where the bombers launched the attack at night, a development that made it difficult for both vigilantes and families of the victims to get access to offer support.

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"There was blood everywhere," Aliyu Gana, a resident of Konduga told the *Daily Trust* last night.

"Dead bodies were all over the viewing centre while the injured, many of them who lost limbs were wailing and crying in pains but help was not forthcoming; some^{close} of them died because they lost a lot of blood," he said. Speaking on the death toll, Usman Kachala who is the Director Search, Rescue and Operations of Borno State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), told newsmen yesterday the incident occurred around 8pm on Sunday.

Kachala said that the three suicide bombers, comprising two females and a male, detonated Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) strapped to their bodies at a film viewing centre and a local tea joint in the community, leading to the death of 17 persons on the spot.

The official added that the death toll increased to 30 as a result of lack of immediate medical attention.

The SEMA official whose team undertook evacuation exercise said 42 others sustained injuries. It was gathered that many of the victims were later transported to Maiduguri, considering that the hospital in Konduga was overcrowded.

"When I and my team arrived Konduga early this morning (Monday), the military prevented us from gaining access to the community to assist the victims.

"They told us they were given order from above not to open the road until 9am," he said.

Konduga which shares border with the Sambisa forest, the fortress of Abubakar Shekau's faction of the Boko Haram had witnessed countless attacks by insurgents who sometimes sneaked through the northern bank of River Ngadda.

"Because of Konduga's proximity to Maiduguri, the terrorists always find pleasure in attacking the town and adjoining communities and I think it is simply for propaganda purposes to show that they are not far from the cities," a security expert said yesterday.

“I think this is the time for more collaboration between the ground troops and Air Force; it is raining season and if you look at the trend over the years, the terrorists normally intensify attacks on unsuspecting population to cause maximum damage,” he added.

Family of victims recount ordeal

A bereaved father, Mallam Saidu Alhaji who lost his son in the attack said his grandson was severely hit by shrapnel of an IED that exploded at the local tea drinking spot, saying Sunday was the saddest day in his life.

“The whole thing was like a dream to me,” Saidu Alhaji said.

“It was about 8pm on Sunday night, we were seated on a mat outside my house, and suddenly we heard deafening sounds; then everyone started running in all directions.

“My son, Bukar was a victim and his son was also severely injured.

“The children used to play near the Mai Shayi (local tea seller) before another bomb exploded toward that area. Then I ran toward there to check but I met my grandson on the ground. Yesterday was most sorrowful of my life,” he said as he wept uncontrollably.

A victim, Abdullahi Musa said the attack was perpetrated because there was no security presence in the community.

“We were charting when we heard a loud explosion; as I was running, another one exploded and behold, as I made a U-turn, I sighted a lady who then detonated a bomb wrapped around her body and that was the last thing I could remember.

“I later saw people lying in blood and it was unfortunate I couldn’t help. Children were crying in agony,” he said.

Borno state Governor, Prof. Babagana Zulum during a sympathy visit to the victims at the State Specialist Hospital in Maiduguri, yesterday, assured that the state government will foot all their medical bills.

He said the state government was ever ready to support the victims in any capacity during their recuperation.

President Muhammadu Buhari had also commiserated with families of victims of the bomb blasts in Borno State.

Buhari, in a statement by his spokesman, Femi Adesina, said that the perpetrators of “evil acts have judgment awaiting them, not only from man, via the long arms of the law, but also from God Almighty.”

He urged security agents to sustain surveillance in all theatres of security challenges in the country, taking into consideration the unconventional methods deployed by terrorists to harm innocent and unsuspecting victims.

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He commended the efforts of emergency response workers and humanitarian organizations.

He prayed that God will grant the souls of the departed eternal rest and comfort their families.

Recent attacks

Daily Trust reports that Sunday's attack in Konduga Local Government was just the latest in the series of attacks carried out by the two factions of the Boko Haram in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa, the three states that have suffered most in the last 10 years.

An attack on April 7, at Muna Dalti village near Maiduguri, which was perpetrated by two suicide bombers, killed 11 people and injured 43 others. On April 29, there was an attack at Kuda Kaya village in Madagali Local Government Area of Adamawa State which killed 26 people.

On April 30, an attack at Duwabayi village in Munguno Local Government of Borno State led to the killing of 14 people. On May 3, many terrorists who attacked a military base in Magumeri in Borno State were killed; while five soldiers were killed and 19 others wounded.

On May 7, Molai, a community near Maiduguri was attacked where 7 civilians were killed and 4 soldiers wounded. On May 11, Moranti in Jere Local Government Area of Borno State was attacked, 9 civilians were killed, while another sustained injuries.

On May 12, the terrorists planted a landmine along Damoboa which killed 3 soldiers and injured 4 others. An army commander was killed same day at the Barkoza Dalori Military Base in Kaga Local Government Area of Borno State.

On May 17, an attack at Shuwa village in Madagali Local Government of Adamawa State killed one policeman while 10 fishermen were killed on May 18, at Ngawo village of Konduga Local Government.

There were other attacks in Dalori of Konduga on May 18 where 2 people were killed; another one at Bulama Isa village of Jere Local Government Area of Borno State led to the death of 5 people while 2 others sustained injuries.

Three military locations at Marte, Dikwa and Keronowa, all in Borno State were attacked on June 2, and even though scores of terrorists were killed during counter offensives by the Nigerian troops, it was reliably gathered that some soldiers and officers were also killed.

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