

# 6 killed, UN hub, others destroyed in Borno

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Six people were killed and many soldiers wounded when Boko Haram terrorists loyal to Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) attacked Damasak in Mobbar Local Government Area of Borno State at night on Saturday.

It was learnt that three women, a man and two soldiers lost their lives during the attack but other sources gave higher figures.

The United Nations has condemned the attack saying thousands of people would face serious humanitarian challenges.

Locals said the assailants had destroyed the United Nations Hub housing all the workers of the international organisation.

The hub was established in Damasak, located 188 from Maiduguri in the northern part of Borno to fast track support for victims of Boko Haram excesses. The town had survived several attacks in the last 11 years.

It was learnt that the insurgents stormed Damasak in the evening and engaged the troops from multiple locations, which led to the burning down of the UN hub and others infrastructures.

While some of the terrorists were engaging the troops at their camps, others were busy burning NGOs warehouses near the UN hub.

A local source said the residence of the traditional ruler of Damasak, and the Norwegian Refugees Commission (NRC) facilities at Fulatari Ward, were also torched.

"The warehouse of the World Food Programme (WFP), which was filled with assorted food items, was completely looted.

"They also carted away medicine and other equipment at a nearby government hospital. They stole the belongings of the poor people who are already in need of support.

"Many vehicles belonging to all the humanitarian agencies in the town were either stolen or burnt," the source said.

But military authorities said Nigerian troops had repelled the violent group, killed some of the attackers while others fled with injuries.

One of them claimed that the onslaught was foiled by the troops with the help of air support.

He said two soldiers lost their lives and three others sustained various degrees of injuries.

The Chairman of Mobbar LGA, Mustapha Bunu Kolo, who confirmed the attack to few journalists, described what happened as "worrisome".

"Yes, there was a devastating Boko Haram attack in Damasak yesterday night...The insurgents destroyed all humanitarian hubs and their facilities after carting away foodstuff at one of their main warehouses.

"The insurgents also went

to General Hospital and carted away medical consumables with a brand new ambulance stationed at the facility," Kolo informed.

Another source said the Boko Haram fighters attacked both the 5 Army Brigade and 145 Battalion simultaneously thereby throwing the whole town into confusion.

He added that they burnt the house of the Divisional Police Officer (DPO).

"The inhabitants of Damasak town were thrown into a panic mode as a result of the gun duel between the Nigeria troops and the terrorists who drove gun trucks.

"While retreating from the town, they carted away an unspecified number of vehicles belonging to NGOs and other people. They looted food items worth millions of naira," he said.

Daily Trust was told that the terrorists attacked the town basically to look for food, medicaments and logistics, saying they have for long, shelved the idea of territorial conquest.

"If you look at their recent exploits, you will discover that they only attack military formations and soft targets in order to get food and fighting equipment," a security expert familiar with happenings in the region, said.

"Even when the military retreated in order to re-strategise, they rarely meet the attackers in those places because they (Boko Haram) these days move out of such places and recoil in their safe locations around the shores of the Lake Chad," he said.

Unconfirmed reports indicated a military fighter jet dispatched to give support to ground troops engaging the assailants had mistakenly dropped a bomb on some locals attending a naming ceremony.

**UN condemns siege**

Speaking on the development, UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria, Mr Edward Kallon, condemned the destruction of their humanitarian hub and other NGOs.

In a statement on Sunday in Maiduguri, Kallon lamented Saturday's attacks saying, "I am deeply concerned about recurrent reports of violent attacks by non-state armed groups putting the lives of civilians under risks.

"Last night and through the morning, a violent attack in Damasak town, in Borno State, was reported with three international aid partners' facilities directly targeted, set ablaze, and sustained damage. I continue to be concerned about the safety and security of civilians and humanitarian workers.

"I strongly condemn the attack, as humanitarian aid operations and facilities are the lifeline for people affected by violence and conflict in northeast Nigeria who are dependent on assistance to survive.



Members of Hunters Group of Nigeria demonstrate during their graduation at the Police College Training ground in Kaduna yesterday

Photo: NAN

"Humanitarian operations in Damasak will be reduced due to the violent attack, which will affect the support to 8,800 internally displaced people and 76,000 people in the host community receiving humanitarian assistance and protection there.

"Civilians and aid workers, their facilities and assets should never be a target. They must always be protected and respected. I call on armed parties to observe and commit to international humanitarian law and human rights law, and ensure the protection of civilians, humanitarian property, and personnel," he said.

Besides the attack in Damasak, sources said three soldiers were killed by suspected members of Boko Haram who sneaked into Molai general area in the outskirts of Maiduguri on Saturday evening.

The area is surrounded by a trench but the assailants used a military camouflage gun truck and took the troops manning the entry point by surprise and succeeded in killing three and left.

**7 killed, 5,000 displaced by Shekau faction in Adamawa**

In neighbouring Adamawa State, seven people have been reportedly killed by Boko Haram fighters loyal to Abubakar Shekau.

The Adamawa State Emergency Management Agency (ADSEMA) also confirmed that no fewer than 5,000 people have been displaced when the terrorists laid siege on Kwapre, a village in Hong Local Government Area of Adamawa State, which lies at the Adamawa/Borno boundary close to the Sambisa Forest.

Sources said the attack was launched on Friday, but nothing was heard until yesterday.

The Executive Secretary of ADSEMA, Dr Mohammed

Sulaiman, said the attack on Kwapre affected neighbouring communities where most of the displaced had taken up a temporary shelter.

According to him, the insurgents stormed Kwapre in nine vehicles, surrounded the village and killed seven people.

"During the attack, 50 houses, worship centres, markets and schools were burnt. Many people including women, girls and men were kidnapped by the attackers," he said.

He, however, said eight persons among the kidnapped victims had escaped.

Chairman of Hong LGA, James Pukuma, said regular and local security personnel had been deployed to guard the community.

**South East govts launch Operation Ebube Agu**

South East governors on Sunday launched a security outfit known as Ebube Agu (the awe of Lion), akin to the one launched by their colleagues in the South West code-named Amotekun.

The South East regional outfit will have its headquarters in Enugu.

A communiqué that backed the setting up of the security outfit was signed by the governors of Anambra, Abia, Enugu, Ebonyi and Imo.

The governors said that the decision was arrived at after exhaustive discussions on the current security challenges in the South East and with valuable contributions from participants.

Daily Trust reports that the summit that heralded the setting up of the security outfit was held in Owerri, the Imo State capital, on Sunday.

The communiqué indicated that the governors strongly and unequivocally condemn terrorism and banditry in any part of Nigeria, particularly in the South East.

Members of the outlawed

Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) are also being accused of perpetrating heinous crimes, Daily Trust reports.

The meeting strongly condemns the burning of police stations, violent attacks on custodial centres with the unlawful release of inmates, and the killings including security personnel, natives/farmers and headmen.

"That the five South East states are on the same page with the federal government on the issue of security challenges in the country. To this end, the meeting makes it absolutely clear that the South East will stand resolutely with the federal government to fight terrorists and bandits to a finish.

"That the political leadership in the South East has resolved to bring together all the arsenals at their command, as one united zone, to fight and flush out criminals and terrorists from the zone," the communiqué said.

The governors who attended the meeting appreciated the formation of the South East joint security requested the Acting IGP to stop the influx of IGP monitoring units but to allow commissioners of police and state and zonal commands to handle their cases.

"Meeting approved that the acting IGP and other security chiefs do invite the leadership of Ohanaeze Ndigbo and CAN to find out the reason for increasing insecurity of the South East.

"Meeting agreed that military policing in the South East should be adequately funded and become effective. Meeting agreed that open grazing has been banned and security agency should implement the ban.

"The meeting encouraged a peaceful coexistence of farmers and headers to allow governors to succeed in the fight against criminality," it said.